



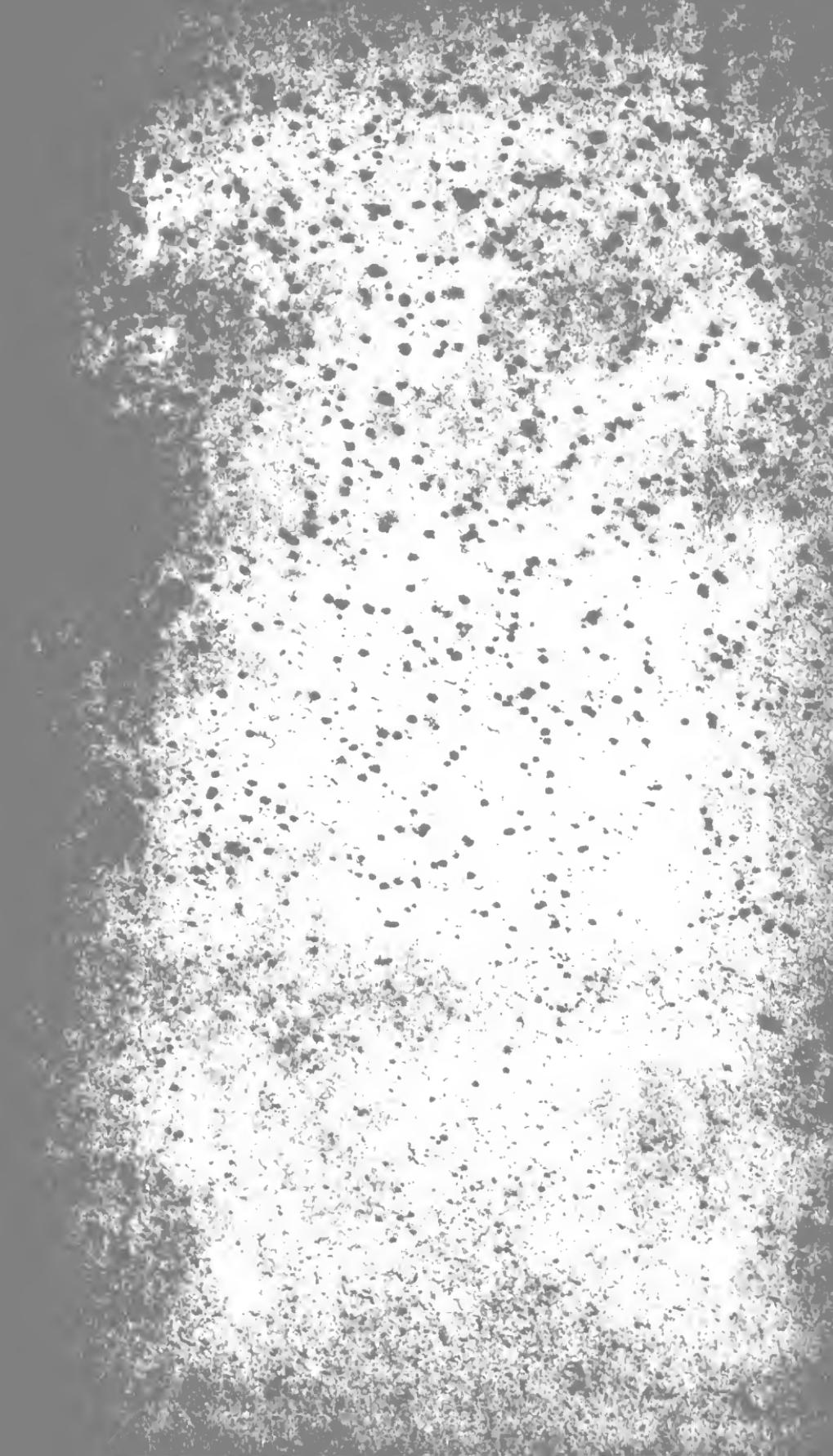
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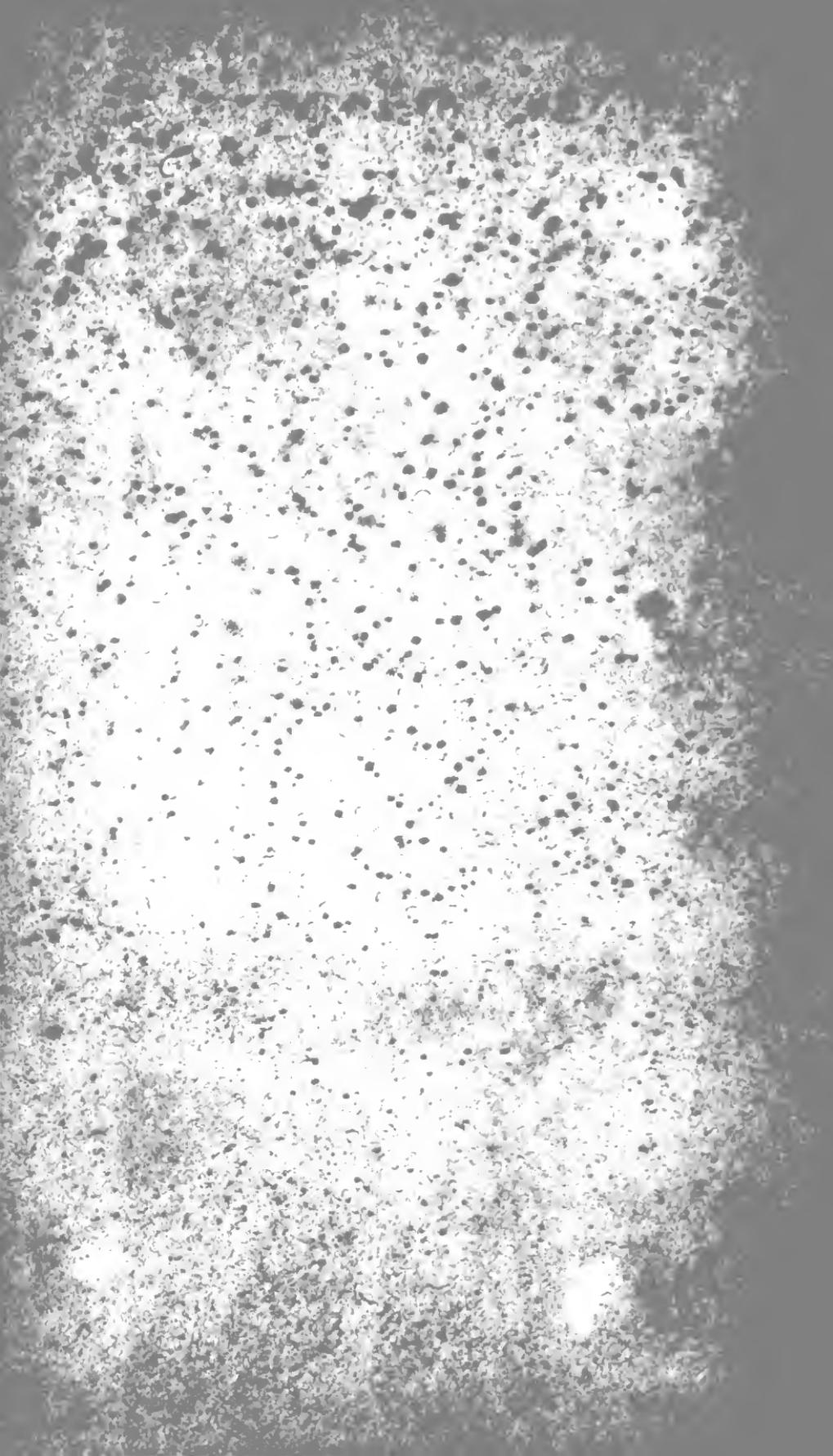
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





HENRY AND ANTONIO,  
OR  
THE PROSELYTES  
OF THE  
ROMISH AND EVANGELICAL  
CHURCHES;

*Carl Gottlieb*  
TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN  
OF  
C. G. BRETSCHNEIDER, D. D., &c. &c.  
General Superintendent at Gotha,

WITH  
ADDITIONAL NOTES,  
BY  
A MINISTER OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

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BALTIMORE:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY LUCAS & DEAVER,  
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1834.

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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The Romish controversy has already excited a considerable interest in this country, and the most careless observer of the times, sees that it is destined before long to engage still more of the public attention. It is acknowledged on all sides that the American church until a few years ago, was asleep on this very important subject, and permitted the most subtle enemy of gospel truth to disseminate his poison unresisted. There is reason to fear, that there are yet many Protestant churches and ministers who are indifferent to the wily efforts of popery, and see no danger to be apprehended from the extraordinary exertions now making by the emissaries of the pope, to diffuse their pernicious principles throughout our country. They believe that popery has been essentially changed since the reformation; that in Europe its more rugged and odious features have been softened down, and that in the United States it is still less repulsive than in Europe. It need scarcely be said that such opinions evince a lamentable ignorance of the history and character of popery. Romanists themselves regard it as an insult to their church, to say that her doctrines have in the least degree been modified since the council of Trent.—They are always the same and unchangeable, and if they were as universally diffused and believed in the United

States as in popish countries, the same corrupt state of morals would exist among us, which now prevails to such a lamentable extent in them.

It is believed that the American public are ready for works on this subject. There have been some very excellent books relating to this controversy already published, and very lately, it has been very vigorously prosecuted in the public papers. But it is thought that all this has only created a desire to read more.

The form of the following work is peculiar, and on that account particularly interesting. It combines the attraction of romance and the power of argument. It is perhaps best designed for those who have neither time nor inclination to read large and learned works on the subject, and that is a very numerous class of readers in this country. It is very popular in Germany, having reached the fourth edition in 1831.

To theologians it is not necessary to say any thing in favor of the author as a theological and controversial writer. Though not decidedly with the orthodox party of Germany, yet his opponents give him credit for fairness in controversy, elegance and clearness of style, and integrity of character. The translator does not wish it to be understood that he agrees with him in every sentiment contained even in this little volume, but those which are in the least objectionable, do not relate to fundamental gospel truth, and about that every reader is permitted to think as he pleases.

Most of the quotations from the scriptures in the original volume are from Van Ess's translation. Van Ess (Leander) was a Catholic priest, and since 1813, professor extraordinary of theology and preacher at Marburg, who has distinguished himself by his translation of the New Testament. The pope has lately prohibited this version, but it is still exten-

sively circulated in defiance of the papal interdiction, and exerts great influence upon the German Catholics. Van Ess has also published several works in favour of the general and free use of the scriptures by the laity, containing copious extracts from the fathers, and Catholic writers, substantiating his opinions. It will be seen by all readers why the quotations were made from that version, rather than from Luther's, and the reason will be considered good. I had once determined to translate from Van Ess's version for the sake of fairness, but on comparing his with the one in common use among us, I found that they do not differ in one single idea of importance, and therefore I concluded to adhere to the authorized version. The Romanist cannot complain of this, for he will find Van Ess's testament as decidedly against the errors of his church as our English Bible.

#### THE TRANSLATOR.

*Baltimore, September 1, 1834.*



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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The object of this little work will best appear from its contents.—It is not intended as an attack but a defence, and is only polemical in cases, where the defence could not be conducted in any other manner, than by turning the weapons of the opponent against himself. It is principally conducted by a comparison of the declarations of Jesus and the apostles with the doctrines and ceremonies, which the Romish priesthood established as universally binding at the council of Trent and in the Romish Catechism. This catechism and the decrees of that council, being the principal creeds of the Romish church, are frequently quoted, so that the objection might not be made, that the doctrines of that church were misrepresented. For the benefit of the unlearned reader it is here observed, that the council of Trent was held, with some interruption, in the years 1545 to 1563,—that the Romish priests assembled there made up, as they thought, for what the Evangelical church had done in abolishing certain doctrines and ceremonies, which were gross abuses and wanted public confirmation, by widening the line of demarcation between them and the Evangelical church, and pronouncing a decree of eternal excommunication against her. The Romish Catechism was first prepared in Rome by order of pope Pius V. in 1566, it was after-

wards frequently published, in which many things that were altogether passed over at Trent or but slightly touched, were more fully established. To set this gospel of Rome beside the gospel of Jesus, was the principal object of this work, and hence only a subordinate place was given to the argument from history.

The defence of the gospel of Jesus against the gospel of Rome is fully justified in the frequent assaults made upon the former. The Evangelical church sees herself continually attacked in books, pamphlets and periodicals in France as well as in Germany. It is not only obscure scribblers, who might be despised, because they are not read, that prefer these ceaseless accusations, but periodicals join the clamor, which, on account of other circumstances, find their way into the reading rooms of the higher classes of society, and fling old and new charges against the Evangelical church like fire rockets, into places where they soonest ignite, and when ignited, soonest occasion mischief. The Jesuits have also been revived—the order whose especial aim it is to oppose and extirpate the Evangelical church; they operate in various ways, they assume various forms, they establish their posts, send out their agents, and insidiously try to gain influence among the higher classes. The work of proselyting is zealously and publicly prosecuted and not without success. Many are gained by dishonorable means, and barter the gospel of Jesus for that of Rome, because they love the world and the praise of men more than God and the truth. Many are won by sophistry and fraud, by specious argument which they are too ignorant to refute, and by unfounded accusations are filled with mistrust against Evangelical christianity. Duty demands of every one who is not indifferent to Evangelical truth, to extend a

guiding hand to such, to undeceive the deceived, and establish the wavering. Silence in season, is laudable; out of season, culpable; but silence, when duty commands us to speak, when the truth calls upon her friends to defend her, when many a troubled and wavering heart longs after light and strength,—is wicked. Who are more loudly called upon to speak on this subject, than those whose official duty it is publicly to acknowledge, honor and defend the truth?

What the author wishes and hopes for both churches, is expressed at the conclusion. May it be fulfilled! He has thought that it would be of some service if a book like this, were put into the hands of young persons about to attach themselves to the church, that it might secure them against the proselyting schemes that are now so insidiously and industriously prosecuted.                   B.

*Gotha, April 7, 1826.*



## RECOMMENDATIONS.

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I have had an opportunity of perusing some detached parts of a work in manuscript, entitled, "*Henry and Antonio, or the Proselytes of the Romish and Evangelical Churches*, by C. G. BRETSCHNEIDER, D. D., &c. &c., translated from the German by a Minister of the Lutheran Church." Although my engagements allowed me only a slight and cursory examination of a few parts, it was quite sufficient to convince me that the work is worthy of the distinguished author, and adapted to be extensively useful. Its structure is eminently fitted to render it interesting to many readers who could scarcely be prevailed upon to go through a volume of similar size written on almost any other plan. I shall be greatly disappointed if it should not prove more than usually acceptable to the religious public. Its learning; its vivacity; its dramatic form; and its admirable spirit cannot fail of attracting much attention.

SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

*Professor of Church History and Ecclesiastical Polity  
in the Theological Seminary, Princeton.*

Princeton, March 10, 1834.

Having read a large portion of the above mentioned work, I feel prepared to concur fully and cordially with the opinion expressed by Dr. Miller of its merits.

C. HODGE, D. D.

*Professor of Biblical Literature, &c. &c. &c.*

Princeton, March 10, 1834.

BRETSCHNEIDER'S HEINRICH AND ANTONIO is an able exhibition of the points in dispute between Romanists and Protestants, and a satisfactory refutation of the principles of the former. The argument is conducted in a form so attractive that it is adapted to interest the general reader, and is fortified by statements which are suitable to the learned. In Germany it has been very popular, and favorably noticed in some of the best journals.

The translator has accomplished a work which cannot fail to be favorably received by Protestants in the United States, particularly at the present time. That the translation has been made with ability cannot, in my judgment, be doubted—the translator being well acquainted with the language of the original, and master of his own.

C. P. KRAUTH,

*Professor of Biblical Literature and Eccl. Hist. in the Theological Seminary  
of the General Synod of the Ev. Luth. Church in the U. S.*

Gettysburg, March 5, 1834.

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That the publication of works treating the question between Catholics and Protestants, is called for at present, will be admitted by all conversant with the history of our times. But it is to be desired that the selection of them be judicious. The *ἀληθευειν εν αγαπῃ* of the Apostle (Eph. iv. 15.) ought not to be lost sight of. Books discussing the question in a tone of personal bitterness and empty invective, will only injure the cause of religion. This being my view, I congratulate you, dear brother, on the selection of "HENRY AND ANTONIO" for translation. That work deserves to be read. Bretschneider understands his subject, and treats it in the tone and spirit of a man who wishes to serve the cause of truth. Among his numerous works I know of none better calculated to benefit the general reader than this. May it find as large a circle of intelligent readers in this country, as it found from the date of its first appearance, and still finds, in the country in which it was written.

CH. R. DEMME, D. D.

*Pastor of Zion's Church, Philadelphia.*

Philadelphia, March 12, 1834.

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New York, March 7, 1834.

We have examined with as much attention as our leisure allowed, the manuscript of a work entitled, "*Henry and Antonio, or the Proselytes of the Romish and Evangelical Churches*, translated from the German of C. G. Bretschneider, D. D. &c. &c., by a Minister of the Lutheran Church," and it gives us great pleasure to say, that we think it an excellent and timely production. The name of the author alone, as a scholar is sufficient security to the public that the work is able, and though on some topics we should be indisposed to recommend his opinions, in the present case he is essentially orthodox, and eminently good. The discussion is so conducted as to be particularly adapted to general use, and cannot fail in doing extensive service to the cause of truth at the present crisis. While many able works have been given to the public on the Romish controversy, they have been frequently wanting in vivacity and simplicity, and neither attract nor instruct the mass of readers. "Henry and Antonio" supplies we think, a great desideratum in these respects.

We have not examined the work in the original, but from the translator's standing as a scholar, and his familiarity with the *tongue of Luther*, we cannot doubt that he has done justice to the original.

JOHN BRECKINRIDGE.

GARDINER SPRING, D. D.

*Pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, N. York.*

G. W. MUSGRAVE,

*Pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church, Baltimore.*

R. J. BRECKINRIDGE,

*Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Baltimore.*

BENJAMIN KURTZ,

*Editor of the Lutheran Observer, Balt.*

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*Baltimore, September 10, 1834.*

I have read with great delight the manuscript of a work entitled, "HENRY AND ANTONIO," &c. The author shows not only great ability, but an intimate acquaintance with the subject which the narrative is intended to illustrate. The controversy between Protestants and Papists does not, perhaps, admit of any new arguments—but this little volume affords a compendious view of the subject, while the colloquial form of the narrative will awaken, and keep alive the interest of all classes of readers. The design is happily conceived, and the execution is every way worthy the design.

THOS. E. BOND, M. D.  
*Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*



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# HENRY AND ANTONIO,

OR THE

## PROSELYTES OF THE ROMISH AND EVANGELICAL CHURCHES.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### HENRY AND HIS EDUCATION.

HENRY, the only son of a wealthy and respectable merchant in L—— in Saxony, had travelled to Italy to study in the schools of celebrated painters. His return to his paternal home was expected with the most intense anxiety by his parents, and his sister Wilhelmina, who had just then entered into a matrimonial engagement. But with this feeling of joy at seeing him who had now been absent three years, there was mingled an emotion of deep solicitude, yea, of melancholy foreboding, which diminished in the father's heart at least, all the pleasure of the anticipated meeting.

Henry had become a Papist in Rome, and had communicated it to his parents only a short time before his arrival. This inconsiderate step deeply pained the strictly evangelical father, who firmly convinced of the superior advantages of his own church, regarded the Romish communion in a very unfavorable light. He was mortified that his only son had attached himself to a church, which in his view, was totally unsupported by the bible.

The family had as yet kept the apostacy of the son a secret; but it was very often the unpleasant subject of their private conversation. Henry had informed them that he had become a Romanist from conviction; he had earnestly entreated them not to consider him as one of those unworthy proselytes, who change their faith as they do their garments, for the sake of a benefice, or a pension, or an advantageous marriage; but all this did not mitigate the grief of the father, who painfully felt, that now a great partition wall separated him from the affections of his son. "How can Henry—he said in deep mortification—have any confidence in us now; how can he any longer respect us, when according to the principles of his church he must look upon us as heretics, as children of the devil, and devoted to eternal destruction? For my part, I know not how I could trust or esteem those, of whom I believed that they were full of soul destroying errors, that they were wholly under the influence of satan, and that they were devoted by God to everlasting damnation!—and he vehemently added—"if he has professed the Jesuitical faith and *cursed* father and mother and teacher, because they educated him in heresy—O, then I never wish to see my child again!"

"That, replied the mother with earnestness, that Henry has certainly not done. I know my son too well! What? to curse the mother who bare and nourished him—that would be too awful!—that my son has not done! He has assuredly not forgotten that passage of scripture, (*Prov. xx. 20.*) 'Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.'"

"I can myself scarcely believe any thing so bad of him," said the father.

"And I, said Wilhelmina—cannot believe that the Romish church demands any thing so unchristian of her proselytes."

"We should really think so, added the father—But a church which condemns and curses us all without distinction as heretics, acts at least consistently, when she demands

of her proselytes, not to exempt their friends and relatives from this malediction. Certain it is, that the Jesuits at least, have required such malediction of the proselytes which they have made, as was a short time ago proved by the publication of such confessions, and an examination of their genuineness.\* But that other Romish priests of a better character than the Jesuits, do the same, or that it is a general rule, I do not believe. But yet every Romish confession of faith which the proselytes must adopt, may contain something by which they must declare themselves free from the spiritual supervision and communion of their parents. At least the confession which Charles B—— adopted in Vienna in 1812, when he became a convert to the Romish faith, contained these express words: "I swear never to fall back again into the errors which I have abjured, and never to afford any aid, counsel, favor or relief to any who hold these errors." How could Henry, if he had also taken this oath, feel any esteem for his heretical parents; or afford them aid, favor or relief?—alas!—I have lost my son—lost him forever."

\*The principal work on this subject is, *Authentic history of the so called profession Fidei Tridentinae*, and several other Roman Catholic confessions of faith, by G. C. F. Mohnike, Greifswalde, 1822, Germany. In the confession of faith which was adopted in Hungary by proselytes to the Romish church, and which originated among the Jesuits, it is said towards the end—"We confess that the Romish doctrine is the catholic, pure, divine, saving, old and true doctrine, but the Protestant is false, erroneous, blasphemous, accursed, heretical, damning, seditious, ungodly, &c.—Hence we curse (maledictos pronuntiamus) our parents, who educated us in the heretical faith ; we curse also those, who raised in our minds any doubts of the Roman Catholic faith. We curse the books which we have read, and which contain those heretical and blasphemous doctrines. We curse also all the works we read, whilst we lived in the heretical faith, that we may not be answerable for them before God at the last day. We moreover swear, as long as a drop of blood runs in our veins, to pursue that accursed protestant faith, in every way, *secretly* and openly, with *force* and *fraud*, (*clam et aperte, violenter et fraudulenter*) with word and deed, yea, even with the sword." See Mohnike, p. 91.

The tears of the mother, which now began to flow, and with which Wilhelmina mingled hers, interrupted the conversation, and were, as usual, the beginning of a long, but melancholy silence, during which nothing was heard but the sighs of the mother, and the footsteps of the deeply excited father, who, under great agitation hastily traversed the room. "How was it possible, he thought to himself, that Henry as a well instructed Protestant christian, could suffer himself to be blinded by such fallacies! What poison must they not have secretly administered to him!—By what religious ledgeremain must they not have deceived him!"

What appeared inexplicable to the father, is very easily solved. Henry was instructed in his boyhood by an orthodox Lutheran minister. He was soon able to recite the whole catechism by heart, and his father believed him to be well grounded in the orthodox system of faith. But in his instructions on christian duties, the teacher did not go beyond the ten commandments. Of the discourses of Christ and his doctrines as taught by the apostles, Henry knew little more than he had learned from the passages quoted in his catechism. He received no instruction in the history of the christian church, and excepting a very few points, he did not know the difference between the Evangelical and Romish confessions of faith. His instructor very inconsiderately taught him to believe that the duty of love which we owe to the *persons* of heretics extended even to their *errors*, and maintained that it was very intolerant to give ourselves any trouble about the differences between the Protestants and Romanists; and that the Romanist could be as good a christian as the Lutheran. Henry's obligations to his own church were altogether overlooked in his instruction, and he was sent into the world liable to be carried away with every wind of doctrine. He was now sent to a high school, where religious instruction was indeed given, but where he had no opportunity of supplying the deficiencies of his juvenile education. The rector, who had the charge of the higher classes, believed that he had performed his duty,

when he merely read the New Testament with his scholars, and as he was teacher of languages, all his explanations had reference exclusively to grammar and idiom. He was so extensive in his illustrations, that during the four years in which Henry attended his class, the learned professor had only proceeded as far as the ninth chapter of Matthew. Of the peculiarities of christianity and of the Evangelical church, Henry heard nothing. He was thence sent to the university. It was celebrated and popular, and every thing could be learned except—religion. Henry heard lectures on *philosophy*. The professor was a celebrated man and *orthodox* besides, and hence he was favored with the chair of philosophy by the *pious* trustees of the University. He belonged to the school of Schelling. The result of the whole was that Henry became a sort of philosophical christian; he would sometimes also settle down in religious melancholy—his mind was harrassed by apprehensions and doubts, and he was far from being contented; and yet strangely inconsistent as he was, he entertained some fanatical notions, and abandoned those studies which had a tendency to excite pleasurable emotions, because he thought that would render him unfit to receive the grace of God, and disqualify him for eternal life. In this unhappy state of mind, he determined at the end of his academical years, to bid adieu to his studies and devote himself exclusively to painting, which he had hitherto pursued merely as an amusement. His father did not object, and thus in the twenty-fifth year of his age, Henry travelled to Italy to study the great masters of his art.

## CHAPTER II.

## HIS RESIDENCE AT ROME AND CONVERSION TO THE ROMISH CHURCH.

A new world now opened to his view, of which before he had only known the name; the *Roman Catholic* world. He heard masses and high offices, he saw episcopal consecrations, pilgrimages, pictures imparting grace, bishops in princely vestments, cardinals, and the pope, as he dispensed his blessing to the kneeling multitude; he was much astonished at all this; but he understood nothing of it, because he had never heard an explanation of these solemnities, and what religious representations they were intended to set forth. His curiosity to discover this, often led him to the Romish chapels. The multitude of the faithful which were often assembled there, their silent prayers, their devout appearance affected his mind, and he often felt himself edified by the sight. Not to appear singular, he followed their example; he kneeled and kissed the cross, and was soon so well acquainted with the ceremonies that he was no longer distinguished from the Romanists. The art, to which he had devoted himself, he here found in the closest connexion with the external practice of religion. All the churches were adorned with splendid paintings, but the principal always was a representation of the "mother of God," in which the artist exerted his highest skill to set forth a perfect picture of chaste loveliness.

All this was, however, as yet not detrimental to his faith, about which to his astonishment he had scarcely been asked. But it did not long continue so. As that which related to the history of the saints and legends in the pictures which he viewed and copied, was not yet understood by him, he found it necessary to ask for explanations, which were very obligingly and zealously given to him. He thus received the first accurate information of the historical traditions of the

Romish church, and of their connexion with her doctrines, ceremonies and organization. Incredible and curious as much of what they said in illustration of their pictures and other works of art appeared to him, and though much, especially in the legends of the saints, was offensive to his inexperienced mind, yet he began gradually to regard these things with a less unfavorable eye. The confident assurance with which they related to him the most incredible stories, and often repeated and spoke of them as things which no man doubted, did not fail to produce upon Henry the usual impression. Belief is contagious, like unbelief. When men constantly hear the same thing, and hear it uttered in full confidence, they become inclined to regard it as true and to mistrust their own judgment.

Henry as an artist of taste, was a creature of imagination and feeling, and he often permitted his fancy to sway his judgment. He yielded to delusions of this kind when his reason secretly reproved his decision. He gradually became better prepared to receive the most wonderful stories as true, for they operated upon a set of feelings which were developing themselves more strongly every day. He began to invest religion with a sort of poetic dress, and to regard it as a matter not of pious practice, but of use for the imagination. He indulged that disposition, for it created emotions of a pleasurable kind, and this, more than any thing else, prepared him for the step he was about to take.

His melancholy and religious sentimentalism did not abandon him in Italy, but they were rather nourished by his studies. The contests and self-mortifications and temptations of the saints which he copied, operated powerfully on his easily excited feelings. He wished to be a saint, to live in a cell, to practice the deepest self-denial, to be attacked by the great enemy of mankind,—to repel his assaults,—to be distinguished for piety, and then his name would blazon in the calendar, and his person and deeds be recorded on canvass for some future artist to study and copy. He ardently longed for some one to converse with on this sub-

ject,—some sentimental like himself who would encourage him in his determination, and flatter him into its vigorous prosecution. Full of tender sensibility, and what he mistook for genuine religious ardor, he was in a proper frame of mind to be captivated by pompous religious display, to be dazzled by gorgeous ceremonials, and to be deluded into the belief that profound awe in a magnificent temple was religion, and the performance of a splendid church service, to which music, and painting, and statuary lent their charms, was piety.

He did not wait long. He was acquainted with a priest who had been in Saxony. They soon became friends, for Rossi (that was his name,) could speak to him of his beloved native land. Rossi had explained to him many of the legends, which the pictures illustrated, and it was perfectly natural that the Romish priest should hold forth the legends of the saints and martyrs as genuine history. Henry could not reasonably take offence. Rossi had not yet even mentioned the Protestant faith, yea, he even pretended not to know that Henry was a Protestant;—Only gradually and very cautiously did he mingle religion with his conversation, and in several expressions, which appeared quite incidental, he set forth the most advantageous side of Romanism. Henry in the beginning contradicted nothing, because he did not wish to wound the feelings of his friend; but gradually this fear vanished, and Henry made objections, which were very few indeed, for he had never been instructed in the differences between the confessions. This contradiction Rossi was waiting for, for now he had an opportunity without appearing urgent, of making his inexperienced friend intimately acquainted with all the peculiarities of Romanism, and of exhibiting all the grounds, which would most powerfully affect the unfurnished mind of Henry. The seed did not remain without fruit. Henry felt more and more that his wisdom would not hold out against the profound arguments of his friend. He gave up one point after another, and it proceeded so far, that the thought

really occurred to him, that in Rome he had first found the true church. The priest soon saw through the undissembling youth, and now first uttered a few words about a change of ecclesiastical confession, to which the late conversion of a Protestant artist in Rome, who wished to gain the patronage of a cardinal, gave the unsolicited occasion. It was not hard to convince Henry that a change of confession was a conscientious duty, if we have heretofore lived in gross error, and this was the basis on which Rossi continued diligently to build. He now ventured to express his serious apprehensions for his friend, because he was not in connexion with the true church,—to let him see the ecstasy which the remotest thought of Henry's return to the true church, would create within him,—and finally to express this thought as the most earnest desire of his heart.

Unable as Henry was to withstand the arguments of his friend in their conversations on the advantages of the Romish church, still a certain something,—a secret feeling of the great importance of the step, which Rossi urged him to take, restrained him. But this gradually vanished, as he reflected on the subject. He at length told his friend how for a long time he had been harrassed by doubts about his salvation, and his perplexed state of mind generally. Rossi, far from removing these doubts, only magnified them by saying, “it is true, we cannot expect that our faith should be always equally strong, and it is a very uncertain thing, for the human mind is not every day the same, and a doubt which a man with the best disposition cannot avoid, may destroy all our confidence, and consequently the saving power of faith, but we Catholics,—he added as though incidently—cannot be disturbed by such doubts,—in the midst of the most perplexing doubts we are yet perfectly certain of our salvation.” He did not explain how that could be until the next day, when Henry himself asked for an explanation.

“The Catholic, said Rossi, has every thing good that belongs to the christian religion which Protestants have; for

they first received it from us, and took it with them into their church. We have, as you, the Holy Scriptures, and honor them as the original fountain of all christian knowledge, and it is the Catholic church upon whose testimony, you regard the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament, as authentic. You have the Apostolical, the Nicene, and Athanasian creeds; we also, and you have them from us. You have baptism and the Lord's Supper; we also. You teach the mystery of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God; you believe in original sin, and in the condemnation of all men on account of sin, and in their deliverance from this condemnation by the sufficient sacrifice of the God-man; and all this we also believe. Then, what you have, we have also; but we have more than you, and hence you are not certain of your salvation, because you have rejected it. The Catholic church, as a benevolent mother of the faithful, and aware of the infirmity of men, has not made the operation of propitiatory exercises dependant on the faith of the laity, (which as you yourself complain, is so uncertain,) but on the power of the priest and the nature of the propitiation itself, which promotes salvation *ex opere operato*, as we are accustomed to say, that is; that the operation will be experienced and all the saving benefits will result from it, whether the christian accompanies it with right faith or not. Hence the Catholic need not trouble himself about the question, whether he has enough of faith, or the right faith in order to obtain justification before God. It is sufficient that the priest absolves him,—that he offers the sacrifice of the mass for him. Upon the same ground the Catholic church has not connected reconciliation with God with the internal act of faith, but with external actions which, when they are only properly performed, assure the poor sinner of his justification. You Protestants have only the Lord's Supper, which you celebrate three or four times a year; we have the daily sacrifice of the mass for all sins, the confession and absolution, indulgencies, and a whole series of good works, as fasting,

the Angelic Salutation, Aves Maria, Pilgrimages, Sacred Places connected with indulgencies, and the like. Hence, the Catholic christian lives in happy contentment and security about his eternal salvation. Whatever scruples he may have, whatever sins he may commit, if he only avails himself of the confessional, of the mass and indulgence, all that will not endanger his salvation. The human heart is weak, and wavering in faith and virtue ; hence it is necessary for man to ground his salvation on something more firm and unchangeable than internal faith, and to have something which will aid him in his weakness. For this weakness the Protestants have no remedy, but we have."

In this way Rossi sought to convince his friend that he would be a very happy and contented man, if he would avail himself of the numerous propitiatory means which the Catholic church affords the christian. After this idea had taken root in Henry's mind, Rossi proceeded further, and began to show to his friend, that in the Protestant church there is nothing but confusion, uncertainty, infidelity and error ; that it is not a true church, that it has no valid priesthood, and no effectual sacraments. It was easy to convince the stranger of this, after he had once begun to believe the contrary, namely, the exclusive truth of the Catholic church. It was only the result of his defective religious education, for as was before observed, he had never been instructed in the differences between the two churches, and of course, had not been furnished with arguments against the errors of Rome. He could not withstand the wily Rossi, who taking advantage of his ignorance, easily infused into his mind these pernicious tenets.

Finally convinced, that the Romish church was the only true one, and which alone by the efficacy of her sacrifices could assure him of justification before God, six months before his return to Saxony, he went over to that communion and uttered his renunciation of Protestantism in the presence of Rossi.

## CHAPTER III.

HIS JOURNEY HOMEWARDS—ANTONIO—GOD AND THE HERETICS—  
THE TRUE CHRISTIAN.

He communicated this immediately, with all the ardor of a new convert to his father, and said that he would assuredly justify the measure, when he had heard his son state the reasons of his conversion. He would have acted more considerately however, if before taking so important a step, he had consulted his father or some other intelligent friend. But Rossi earnestly advised him not to do it, and said that it would only excite the opposition of his parents, and that his conversion to the true and only saving church, would only thereby be rendered more difficult. Henry suffered himself to be persuaded. He did as many apostates do; he solicited no counsel from a sensible man. He had such great confidence in his own judgment, that he thought he stood in no need of the advice of others. Rossi had explained the grounds so clearly, that he felt confident he could defend them against any opponent, and he even indulged the secret hope, of converting his parents also to the true and infallible church.

He flattered himself with this confident expectation the more, because his father did not express any disapprobation in his answer. He insisted however, upon his immediate return, which Rossi earnestly tried to prevent, and even said, that disobedience to parents when salvation is concerned, is a meritorious act. But Henry determined to obey his father's command. Respecting his conversion, his father only said a few words to this amount, that they would speak of that when he should arrive at home, and that he hoped, Henry had not become a Romanist from impure motives. As he was not conscious of that, he commenced his journey homewards full of confidence and joy.

His mind continued to be elated as long as he breathed the air of Italy. But when from the summit of the Alps he for the first time again beheld the German sky, it appeared as though his spirits began to droop, and this actually was the case more and more, the nearer he approached his native land. Displeased at himself, that his heart now began to fail, especially as he could find no cause of uneasiness in his understanding, for he was not conscious of having done wrong, he again went over the whole ground of argument, by which Rossi had persuaded him to become a Romanist, and thereby sought to gain the necessary confidence of conviction, by which he might suppress that wonderful emotion of heart which harassed and humbled him. This contributed somewhat to his relief, but not enough. His heart began to beat again with unusual violence the nearer he approached home, and he at length found the most effectual source of contentment in the confidence, that he was so dearly loved by his parents, that even if he failed in convincing them of the propriety and sincerity of his conversion, yet that they would kindly extend their indulgence to him. But to be better prepared to meet the objections, which he expected would be made, he tarried a week in Frankfort on the Mayne, and employed this season of rest, in writing down the reasons of his conversion, which were only so many accusations against the evangelical faith, that he might study them in their connection, and impress them more deeply on his mind.

The arrival of the son was anticipated by the family at home with no very pleasant sensations. True, they were not precisely ashamed of his rash and precipitate act, but they experienced a certain feeling of mistrust against the proselyte, and a painful uncertainty whether the internal man had not also changed with his confession of faith, and whether he could now sustain to them the old familiar relation in which they all formerly rejoiced.

Whilst Henry was employed in his preparation for the theological contest he expected to have with his father,

another opponent rose immediately by his side, a circumstance which he did not at all anticipate. Shortly before he left Rome, he took into his service a young man, whose handsome personal appearance, sound understanding and honesty of character highly recommended him to his new master. Antonio,—that was his name,—was by birth a Neapolitan, and was as an orphan brought up in a monastery. As he was anxious to learn and industrious, he gained considerable information for one in his circumstances, which together with his beautiful person, procured for him a station in the retinue of a German baron, with whom he performed many journeys, and finally came to Rome. Here Henry saw him, and after the death of Antonio's master took him into his service, with the determination of taking him to Germany, for he was pretty well acquainted with the language of that country. Henry soon became much pleased with him, and it afforded him gratification to give further instruction to the young man, as far as circumstances would admit. He permitted him to take books out of his own library, and Antonio always selected German books, that he might improve himself in the language. Henry cheerfully assisted him in acquiring the language, and he was soon able to understand a German book with facility. He was particularly fond of historical and geographical works, the contents of which he soon mastered, for he had a most retentive memory. Henry did not precisely know what he should do with him in Germany. He hoped however, to procure some profitable employment for him ; especially as Antonio had several very flattering recommendations to Romish priests.

With respect to religion, Antonio knew no more than his teachers, the *padres* in Naples, had taught him. As for himself, he had read the Romish catechism, and an Italian translation of the decrees of the Council of Trent, and thus for a layman, was a learned Romanist. His teachers had done every thing in their way to make him a good Catholic. He believed that no man could be a christian, who did not

hear mass, keep the fasts, pray the pater noster, receive the priest's absolution, and humbly believe every thing which the church commanded him to believe. The *padres* had particularly excited within him such an utter abhorrence of all heretics, that he was agitated with fear whenever he met one in Rome. The clearest of all truths to him was, that God looks upon heretics with anger and abomination, that they are under the dominion of the devil, and that they are devoted with him to everlasting damnation. His fancy had pictured a wonderful representation of those heretical countries, where according to his expression, "faith ends, and the dominion of the devil begins." Hence he was at first doubtful, whether he should accompany Henry to the heretical Saxony, and only finally determined when he heard that there were also Catholic churches and priests there, who were zealously engaged in the diffusion of the true faith. From many expressions of his master he even indulged the hope that there his fortune would soon be made.

As long as they were travelling over the Alps, the magnificent displays of nature's works alone occupied the attention of Antonio, and without observing it, he had already trodden on the heretical soil of Zurich. He highly extolled the beauty of the country, its thriving agriculture and substantial buildings, and admired these still more as he passed through Stuttgart, Carlsruhe and Heidelberg. Yet it appeared strange that in these delightful regions he had thus far seen no monk, and very seldom a priest, whilst in Rome and Naples they are met at almost every step. He expressed his surprise to Henry, and was evidently much confused, when he heard that these prosperous countries were the possession of heretics. Henry was too much occupied with himself to observe the agitation of his servant. As they proceeded on their journey and continued to see finely cultivated fields, a prosperous and moral people, and yet saw no priests, monks, images of saints or monasteries, the theology of Antonio was not equal to this remarkable circumstance, and he was utterly at a loss what to think of the

evident smiles and blessings of Providence upon these accursed heretics. He could not reconcile this apparent contradiction. He at length took courage to awaken his master out of his reverie, and freely disclose his heart.

"You are a good Catholic, said he, and hence do not doubt that the Catholics alone can be saved, and that all heretics will be cursed. For they have not the true faith; they have not true repentance, no true sacraments, no true worship; their preachers cannot effectually absolve; they reject the vicegerent of God and of Christ, the holy father, and are therefore rebels against Christ and God; they are beset by the devil and are led by him into all error and wickedness; heresy is the mother of all licentiousness. All this is very certain, for the holy church teaches it, and she cannot err. And yet I see these heretical countries abundantly blessed of God, more extensively and beautifully cultivated, more populous, their population better clothed and sheltered, and the houses more numerous and commodious than those of the dominions of the holy father. How can God be so favorable to these accursed reprobates? And it astonishes me still more that here where heresy prevails, I find good order, good morals, public security, industry and general prosperity. Here I scarcely see a single beggar, whilst with us, they besiege every street; here men know nothing of robberies and assassinations, whilst with us they are very common. O tell me how is this possible? So much I see, that in this country a false and pernicious faith prevails, but the people are honest, whilst with us the true faith prevails and the people are not remarkably moral. Were I not so good a Catholic, I would be tempted to believe that these people also have religion, and that they cannot be worse than we."\*

Henry looked upon his servant with astonishment. This

\*We may also observe that in the Protestant countries, agriculture and industry were enriched by the suppression of numerous holidays, lost to labor in Catholic countries, and which are in reality, negative quantities, that diminish by all their amount, the aggregate of nation-

speech was quite unexpected, for Antonio had until then concealed his thoughts from him. But they related to a point, upon which he himself had not meditated, and to which he was unable at the moment to make a reply. "God is also merciful to unbelievers,—he finally stammered out with considerable reluctance,—that they may have time and room for repentance." But he felt very sensibly, how unsatisfactory this reply was, and he was almost alarmed at the thought of what he should reply to his father, were he to

al industry and riches. *Villers' Essay on the Reformation*, p. 138, *Dover, N. H. edition*, 1807.

"Agriculture, economy and its various branches were in a deplorable state of degradation. Such is nearly their present condition in the fine provinces of Naples and Rome, in Spain and Portugal. Poverty, indolence and immorality, all sorts of vices are engendered among people of such dispositions. What activity, on the contrary, what improvements in agriculture, in rural economy, in the government, strike the attention of an observer in the midst of the cold and infertile fields of Scotland, in England and Holland! The contrast of these indubitable effects of the two religions is more particularly perceptible in Germany and Switzerland, where the different territories which are intermixed, cause the traveller to pass continually from a Catholic to a Protestant country. Does he meet with a miserable mud cottage, covered with thatch, the fields badly kept, wretched rude peasants, and many beggars; he will be in little danger of erring, if he conjecture that he is in a Catholic country. If, on the contrary, neat, pleasant houses are seen, offering the spectacle of affluence and industry, the fields well enclosed, a culture well understood, it is very probable he is among Protestants." *Ibid*, p. 213.

"It is a fact that more crimes are committed in catholic than in protestant countries. Cit. Rabman, President of the special tribunal of eloquence, in his *coup-d'oeil sur l'état*, &c. says, that the number of malefactors in the catholic and protestant cantons is in the proportion of four, if not six to one. At Augsburg, the territory which offers a mixture of the two religions, of 946 malefactors, convicted in the course of ten years, there were only 184 protestants, that is to say, less than one in five. The celebrated philanthropist Howard observed that the prisons of Italy were incessantly crowded—while he affirms that the prisons of Berne are almost always empty; that in those of Lausane he did not find any prisoner; and only one at Shaffhausen; here are facts, I do not draw any conclusion." *Ibid*, p. 213, note.

ask the same question. He included this question among his present investigations, but found that the more he reflected upon it, the less satisfactory was his answer.

Antonio suffered himself to be put off with this reply, but he was not satisfied. This double contradiction continually revolved in his mind; heresy is an abomination before God, and all heretics are cursed, and yet God blesses them; they are children of the devil and full of soul destroying errors, and yet they are moral, upright and honest. Whilst Antonio was perplexed by these doubts, he passed a church, when the bell was ringing for Sunday worship,—he took courage to follow the multitude, and for the first time in his life, he entered a heretical church. It is true, that his father confessor had before his departure from Rome, forbidden this as a grievous sin; but his curiosity to see heretics at their worship was too strong to be resisted, and Antonio hoped to be absolved from this at the next confession, even if he were obliged to undergo some severe penance, for as a good Catholic he was determined to confess it.

Antonio entered shyly and timorously, just like one who is about to commit a heinous sin. There was no consecrated water there, that is so effectual in driving away evil spirits from the faithful, and none of those who entered availed themselves of that wonderful preservation from diabolical influence so powerful in the Romish church. "The poor wretches! (thought Antonio,) how can they escape the temptations of the devil without the holy water?" He looked round upon the walls and pillars, but there was no saint, and not even the Virgin Mary to be seen. "The pitiful fools! (he sighed again,) to whom do they pray, for they have neither saint nor the Mother of God." It also appeared very strange, that none of those who entered, bowed down before the altar; but as he approached nearer, he saw that there was no pyx \* containing the body of God. "Alas, the miserable creatures! (he thought again,) how

\*The box in which the consecrated host is kept.—[Tr.]

can they receive grace, when they have no sacrifice ! " He already began to repent that he had mingled with a congregation without holy water, without saints, and a pyx, for without these, it appeared to him to be little better than a heathen assembly. In the mean time the service commenced, and the earnest singing of the whole congregation, which he heard here for the first time, and the simple beauty of the tune, deeply engaged his attention. Of the portion of scripture read, he understood nothing ; but the next hymn which the congregation sung, made a deeper impression on his mind than the tones of the hired singers in the papal chapel, and he could not refuse the friendly offer of a neighbor who handed to him a hymn book. He read, and the congregation sung the following hymn :

Mistaken souls, that dream of heaven,  
And make their empty boast  
Of inward joys and sins forgiven,  
While they are slaves to lust.

Vain are our fancies, airy flights,  
If faith be cold and dead ;  
None but a living power unites  
To Christ the living head.

A faith that changes all the heart ;  
A faith that works by love ;  
That bids all sinful joys depart,  
And lifts the thoughts above.

Faith must obey our Father's will,  
As well as trust his grace ;  
A pard'ning God requires us still  
To perfect holiness.

Is this also true ? thought Antonio to himself—or have the heretics only fancied these things to console themselves, knowing that they have not the true faith ? He was soon to hear more than this. The sermon commenced and treated this very subject; that without holiness no man can

be a true christian, and can have no claim to salvation, however orthodox, and zealous he may be in works of external devotion. Antonio was all ear, and the longer he heard the more attentive he became. The portion of scripture on which the preacher grounded his observations, impressed Antonio more than the sermon. It was the gospel for the eighth Sunday after Trinity, Matt. vii. 15—23. “The words of the wise, says Solomon, Eccles. xii. 11, are as gods and as nails,” and so Antonio felt the words of the text in his heart, and he finally believed here to have found an explanation of the difficulties which lately harassed him, why in the land of heretics there were witnessed the manifest blessing of God and christian uprightness.

The Saviour says, (for by degrees this became the general course of Antonio’s thoughts,) that sheep’s clothing does not constitute the true prophet, consequently the surplice does not make the true bishop, and the rosary, fasting and hearing mass do not complete the true christian. “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” If true priests are known by the good fruits of a christian life, how much more christian laymen? Hence from true christian faith nothing vicious can proceed, and from heresy nothing virtuous can come. “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” This reminded Antonio of one of his acquaintances, the servant of a Neapolitan duke, who told him in confidence, that at the instigation of his master, he was going to assassinate another Neapolitan nobleman, and when Antonio tried to dissuade him from it, he received for reply: “Fool, the priest has already absolved me twice from the guilt, and if he does not do it the third time, another will.” That appeared to Antonio to be evil fruit, which showed that the tree which bare it, was evil also. Whilst he was thinking whether a priest had the power to absolve a man from the crime of murder, the preacher recited the words of the nineteenth verse, and they struck him with peculiar force; “every tree that bringeth not forth

good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." Is not the following exception made, thought Antonio; "unless a priest or a papal indulgence absolves him?" He thought the exception *must* be made, but he heard nothing of it. The preacher from this passage insisted forcibly on the *unconditional* necessity of christian holiness for the attainment of salvation.

Much more deeply did the following passages impress him; "not every one saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven; many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess and say unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." So, said Antonio to himself, it is not enough, that we openly profess Jesus to be the Lord, and have the christian confession of faith; not enough to work miracles to be a good christian? If that is not enough, then by all the saints! it is not enough for the Catholic church to be the true church, that she alone has the true confession of faith, that miracles still continue with her, that her priests can banish evil spirits by holy water and benedictions! If that is not enough, then the Lutherans can also get to heaven if they lead christian lives.

Full of these thoughts, Antonio left the church and went home, and as his master had just gone out, he asked his landlord whether he had a bible in the house, and could find the text of the sermon he had just heard. Antonio wished to see whether the preacher had left nothing out, for he thought there must be something there which made fasting, confession and absolution, and the rosary essential to salvation, and that the indulgence or the wearing the cloak of a penitent monk also protected the sinner from damnation. But he found nothing else but the naked words which the preacher had read. "But is there nothing left out in this translation," he asked the landlord, as he re-

turned the bible. The landlord who well understood with whom he had to do, said nothing but brought a little book, which he presented to Antonio with these words; "Here is a translation of the bible by a Catholic priest." It was the New Testament translated by a Catholic minister Van Ess. Antonio found in it the same, and nearly in the same words, but nothing more.

"Then, thought he, with a degree of ill nature, the heretical preacher is right! but how can that be when the church teaches differently, and she cannot err! But he certainly has the words of the Saviour on his side. Which is now more infallible, his words or the decision of the church? Can the latter be more infallible, when she receives all her doctrines and infallibility from Christ?"

Antonio was evidently in a dilemma, from which he could not extricate himself. He hoped to be able to solve it after he had read more of the New Testament, and the benevolent landlord seeing that the book afforded him pleasure, begged him to accept it as a present. He received it very thankfully, but was soon troubled by conscientious scruples, for it just then occurred to him, that only heretics allowed so free a use of the bible, and that the holy father had only lately again represented the reading of the bible in the language of the country as extremely pernicious. Yet the thought that the translator of this testament was a Catholic priest, gave him courage to look into the book, and all apprehension immediately vanished, when he saw on the title page the episcopal approbation of the work. Antonio now read this testament with uncommon zeal, and had sufficient time to devote to it, for his duties as a servant were quickly despatched, and his master spent nearly the whole day in his own room. When they left Frankfort, he had read the whole testament through twice. It was with him as with Luther, when in Erfurt he first read the bible; he was astonished at the many new things which he found, and much more at the many old things which the Romish church maintains as essential to christianity, but of which

he found nothing in the testament. The old and new things were continually revolving in his mind, and often perplexed him not a little. In such moments of perplexity, when the old had the preponderance in his mind, he occasionally murmured to himself, "it is certainly very dangerous for a good Catholic to travel through heretical countries." At other times, when the new which he had seen, and heard, and read, gained the mastery in his thoughts, he acknowledged with an emotion of joy, that he could become a quite different spiritual being, if he dared trust and surrender himself to the new. He felt a strong disposition to communicate his thoughts and feelings to his master; but Henry's moroseness, his short and sometimes severe replies, alarmed Antonio, and induced him to hold his peace. But this also gave him much uneasiness. He saw plainly that some deep anxiety oppressed his master. He also became affected, and finally asked him in a tone of sympathy, what it was that made him so unhappy, and kept him so silent, when his near approach to home ought to enliven him. Henry was silent, and Antonio did not repeat the question.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### HENRY'S ARRIVAL AT HOME—THE PRIVILEGE OF CHANGING OUR FAITH.

Henry was only fifteen miles from home, as one day at noon he entered a village where his mother and sister met him, and with tears of joy locked him in their arms. This sincere gush of unchanged affection dispelled the gloom which had for some time oppressed him. He felt that they still recognized in him a son and a brother, and that his change of faith had not changed their love. He was now inspired with the hope of meeting his father without even a

look of displeasure on his part, although Henry immediately observed that his father had not accompanied them. The apology of the good mother, that business had prevented him, was only a pretence. He could no longer be sincerely pleased with his son; he could not altogether suppress his deep mortification; he was determined to let the son feel that he had alienated himself from his father's affections, and hence he did not go out to meet him. Henry had anticipated something of this, and it became more certain, when after the first gush of joy, a silence and interruption of the conversation occurred between him and his mother, which was very painful to them both. It was evident that there was one point between them which needed explanation, but which each was reluctant to introduce. But genuine affection does not long endure such reserve; they came to an explanation, and Henry consoled his mother with the assurance that he was still the same loving and dutiful son, and by the promise that he would faithfully and honestly lay before his father the whole ground of his conversion, by which he would be convinced, that neither a disordered fancy, nor inclination to mysticism, nor any other dishonorable motive induced him to embrace Romanism, but grounds reasonable and deeply matured, which the father himself could not but justify. The mother thought that the latter was hardly to be expected, but consoled the son by saying that much already would be gained, if he could convince his father that he had acted honestly. With a lightened heart, Henry proceeded to L—— with his mother and sister, and fell upon the bosom of his dear father, who received him with friendly composure. The conversation of the first few hours related to the subject of his tour, and the changes that had taken place in his native land during his absence; but in the evening when the family was sitting together alone, and mutual confidence restored, Henry himself introduced the subject of his conversion, for he felt more courage in the immediate presence of his amiable father, than he did at a distance.

" Dear father, said he, you will doubtless look upon your son with suspicion, because he has gone over to the Romish church; you are perhaps displeased with me, and I cannot complain of that, for I know your principles. I feel it my duty faithfully to state the whole case, and I hope that you will kindly hear me, that on this point there may be a correct understanding between us.

FATHER.—I expect such a disclosure from you, my son, and I am pleased that you have commenced the subject, for I should have felt it my duty to demand it of you. I do not deny it (he said with earnestness,) that your course has erected a partition wall between you and me, which must be broken down before our hearts can be united as formerly.

HENRY.—I hope to be able to reconcile you, if you only hear me attentively, and judge impartially.

FATHER.—You can expect both of me, and the more certainly, for we will not speak of this subject unless your mother and sister are present; for they have as good a right as I have to know your sincerity.

HENRY.—In the general you would not blame a man for leaving one christian church and joining another. I well know that it is a principle strongly maintained, that it is not allowable for a person to change his confession of faith; that every one must remain in the church in which he was born and educated, and to which he promised fidelity when he was first received as an adult member. But I never could justify this principle in its full extent. I willingly admit, that a man is under the same obligations to the church to which he belongs, as to the state in which he was born and brought up. Only unfeeling, unreasonable and bad men can leave their own church from mere grounds of selfishness or aggrandizement. But it is not meant that a man under all circumstances is to remain in the church with which he is connected. For we are all sacredly bound to follow the truth, as the Saviour says, "he that is of the truth, heareth my voice!" Now if my church has

departed from the truth, and I find that another church has been faithful to the truth, then I have good grounds to leave my church and go over to the other. For however thankful every one should be to his own church for the first instruction he received within her pale, yet it is not to be denied, that we do not exercise any choice in our original connection with the church; we feel attachment to it because our parents do, and have no other grounds of preference; and even if persons are admitted to full communion at an early age, they generally do not know why they join that church rather than any other. Is this promise made so young to be forever binding? Even when we see that we were in error, shall we continue to walk in that way which we have discovered to be wrong, merely because we walked in it as children, and continued in it to mature age?

MOTHER.—But suppose we have found ourselves happy in this way? And millions of others walk in it and are happy also? And when we see parents and friends, whose understanding and piety we honor, walking contentedly in this way?

HENRY.—You think, dear mother, that I am speaking of the lawfulness of going over from the Protestant to the Catholic church. I am not speaking now of a change of one good church for another, but of the liberty of changing our confession of faith in general, and my remarks will also apply to the Catholic who goes over to the Protestant church.

FATHER.—It is so, my dear wife. In general, the change of one confession for another cannot be regarded as unlawful or immoral, and that position which some maintain, that he who wishes to be an honest man must remain in his own church, is utterly groundless. If it were correct, then Jesus and his apostles could not have abandoned Judaism, the first christians could not have forsaken heathenism, our German ancestors could not have turned from the worship of Wodan to the service of the true God, and our fathers of 300 years ago could not have separated from

the Romish church. Abraham went out from his idolatrous country, from his father's house, and in a strange land served God, who made the heavens and the earth. Besides, the truth is so sacred a thing, that we should never, at least in religion, sacrifice it to circumstances.

**WILHELMINA.**—Your examples, father, with the exception of a single one, relate only to conversion from a religion altogether false as heathenism was, or from a corrupt one, as Judaism, to true religion or christianity, and are not applicable, as it appears to me, to an exchange of one christian church for another. Here we have in each church, I mean the Evangelical and Catholic, baptism and the Lord's supper, the same bible, the same Christ, the same God. If then both churches have the essentials of christianity, the other smaller differences do not appear to justify the leaving of one for the other, but every one should continue in connection with the church, to which he belongs. You yourself taught me, that a wife, who does not see all perfection in her husband, or discovers unexpected faults, and observes more amiable qualities in other men, could not be justified in separating from him, but must continue faithful to him, bear with his faults and only look upon his virtues. I should think that every one bore a relation somewhat similar to his church, as a wife does to her husband. Every church has its imperfections, but also its good qualities. It can demand inviolable fidelity.

**FATHER.**—I wish, Wilhemina, that your intended husband were present; he would be pleased with your objection. As respects your comparison, it is not at all applicable to the case, but is lame, like most comparisons. You should have added, that the obligations of married persons to bear the faults of their partners have their bounds, for instance, when one party no longer performs the promised duties and no longer fulfils the object of matrimony. So long as your husband keeps his promise, so long you are bound as his his wife faithfully to obey him and to observe your vows, even if another man pleases you better. If he commits a fault

inadvertently, then you must forgive him, for you also may have faults which will require his indulgence. If however, he designedly neglects his duties and frustrates the object of matrimonial life, he then himself dissolves the bond which held you to him, and the laws will annul your obligations. It depends upon yourself whether you are resolved to endure his conduct, remain with him, and perform the duties of a wife; you thereby do no injury and commit no fault against a third person, for you are not under obligations to any other man. But quite different is your relation to the church. Christianity has a fixed and high object in view, and the church is established for the purpose of accomplishing this object in every individual man. If it is so constituted that it not only does not hinder but promote this object, and guide its members to the attainment of it, then it is a good church, for it affords what it promises. Then men must remain faithful to it, even if it has faults and imperfections, just as you, dear Wilhelmina, are bound to be faithful to your husband, if he performs the duties of a husband, even if he has many imperfections. But if a church is so constituted, that it does not promote the object of christianity in individuals, and moreover, if it has doctrines, customs, and an organization, which oppose this object, and prevent its attainment in the minds of its members, then you are not at liberty to remain in connection with it, as you are at liberty to continue with your husband from whom you could be lawfully separated. You are much rather bound to dissolve your connection with such a church, for here you have duties to perform towards a third person, who has commanded you to do this. Ask not who this third person is? There is more than one. The first is *God*, who in Christ has sent you a guide to perfection, whom you are bound to hear. You are not allowed to be satisfied with any thing less than perfection. The husband at the altar does not bind himself to exhibit all the perfections, which the imagination of his bride may demand of a man. For how could he know, what wonderful picture of masculi-

line perfection the tender heart of a sentimental girl has created? But here you know, that we are to be perfect, as our father in heaven is perfect. You dare not be satisfied with any thing short of it; the church dare not substitute any thing else in place of it, but it should be "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephes. v. 27.) Then you dare not retain your connection with a corrupt church, as a wife may continue with a bad husband. Again; the third person towards whom you have duties to perform is your *Saviour* himself,—the church is his property, and that the church might accomplish the object in view, he sacrificed his life. He is the invisible Lord, the supreme head of his church, and he cannot acknowledge any communion as his church and a true church, whose doctrines and rites oppose the design for which he was sent of God, even if that communion does call him Lord. But again: this third person is *yourself*. For in a corrupt church you can hardly be a true christian, well pleasing to the Saviour, and if from your superior illumination you might possibly be, yet it is immoral to expose yourself continually to the dangerous and corrupting influence of such doctrines and rites, which may lead you from the path of true christianity. You are morally bound to flee from such temptations, and to inform and strengthen your better judgment; so for your own sake you are bound to leave the corrupt church and unite yourself with the purer. That third person is finally *your fellow christian*. Whilst you remain connected with a church which opposes the design of christianity, you encourage others to persevere, who know not how to resist its evil influence—you contribute to the support of a pernicious system—you prevent the prosperity of your brethren, and commit treason against true christianity.

HENRY.—Dear father, you have expressed my sentiments precisely! O how I am cheered by these words! I hope to be able to prove to you, that the Roman Catholic is the true church, which promotes the object of christianity—but the

Protestant church opposes it. At least this is my firm conviction, supported on substantial grounds. And when I have laid them before you, and you are brought to acknowledge their force, O then dearest father—

FATHER.—(Interrupting him sternly)—I must follow you and also become a Catholic?

Henry was silent:—he felt that the inference was natural, but not daring to confirm it, only remarked, that he hoped to receive forgiveness of his father.

The father did not let him off so lightly; he rather gave a direction to the subject, which made the young man tremble. “If you—he said solemnly—are an honest man and a christian, and we prove to you that the Romish church opposes the design of christianity, you must abandon her communion and return to ours!”

Henry was reluctantly silent.

“Promise me—continued the father, extending his hand—promise me that you will do it, if I am to believe in the sincerity of your Catholicism and not to regard you as a hypocrite.”

Henry took courage;—he grasped his father’s hand and solemnly promised. He was certain of his opinions; he was a Romanist from conviction. Why should he be apprehensive?

“With this agreement said the mother, let us close the conversation on this subject, and devote the remainder of the evening to amusement.” Father and son willingly expressed their consent; the former only upon the condition, that Henry would prepare himself to bring forward his arguments for his church against Protestantism the next evening. The numerous visits, however, which Henry received and paid, prevented the fulfilment of his promise until the third evening.

## CHAPTER V.

## GOING TO CHURCH,—THE LATIN LITURGY.

It was Sunday morning, and the parents and Wilhemina were preparing to go to church. Henry did the same, and the mother secretly rejoiced at it. It was not so with the father. He was silent, but his stern countenance too plainly discovered that his mind was deeply disturbed. Finally, as they were about to depart, and Henry reached after his hat, the father asked: "do you intend to accompany us?—to go with us to church?"

HENRY.—Yes!—I hope that you will not disapprove of it.

FATHER.—I think it exceedingly strange, my son. You regarded us as so grossly erroneous in our religious opinions, that you separated from us, and yet you will go with us to church? so you will do a thing, which you know to be wrong! And is it not directly against the principles of your church to enter a heretical place of worship? Is it not forbidden by your priests?

"That prohibition, said Henry with great confidence, does not affect me, for before my departure from Rome, I received the papal permission, not only to go to Protestant churches, but also to celebrate the Lord's Supper with them, and to observe all their church rites."

"Silence, sir, cried out the father with great violence, silence, and stay back! you cannot, you dare not enter our church so long as you hold us as cursed heretics, and our worship as cursed heresy. No man can give you authority to act the hypocrite and deceiver, and none but a paltry fellow would make use of such permission."

Henry stood confused, ashamed;—he remained behind; The mother wept;—the devotion of the day was lost to the father. The abominable examples of secret Catholics, who with the papal permission, for so many years played the

part of Evangelical christians, occurred to him. He thought of king Charles the second of England, who repeatedly and publicly vowed fidelity to the English church, and yet after his death in 1685, it was made evident, that for a long time he had been a Romanist. He thought of the Saxon crown Prince Frederick Augustus, the son of Augustus the Strong, whom they secretly made a Catholic in Italy, and gave him permission to conceal it from 1712 until 1717; he thought of the permission given to Frederick, the crown prince of Hesse Cassel to conceal his conversion from 1749 to 1754. He remembered, how the Duke Moritz, William of Saxony, administrator of the Protestant institute Zeitz, was secretly converted to Romanism in 1715, by the Jesuit Schmeltzer, who insinuated himself into his favor under the title of a Secretary of legation, and how he concealed it even from his wife, and continued to manage the institution for two years. How could he have forgotten the recent examples of this kind? for instance, that of the duke of Stolberg, who as late as 1798, appeared a zealous Protestant in a pamphlet which he wrote, and yet in 1800 publicly avowed that he had been a Romanist for seven years? And that of the court-preacher, Stark of Darmstadt, who performed the duties of an evangelical minister until his death, but during his life, secretly published a defence of the Romish church and an attack against the Protestant, and after his death was buried in the Romish grave yard? And that of Mr. Von Haller, who in a letter to his family, himself acknowledges that in 1820, he was secretly admitted into the Romish church by a Romish bishop in a private country house, but that a dispensation was granted him to continue externally an evangelical christian, and a member of the council of his native town, which is sworn to maintain the evangelical faith? This same Mr. Von Haller confessed in that letter that the apostate duke Adolphus of Mecklenberg-Schwerin assured him, that there are many secret Romanists in Germany, who are allowed the liberty of concealing it from the people.

To find Henry in the society of such men, whose conduct he regarded as contemptible hypocrisy, or at least as unpardonable weakness, was exceedingly painful to him, although it was nothing more than what he might have expected, since he knew so many instances of the kind. He was so much excited, that he could pay no attention to the services of the church. His dark and troubled eye was steadfastly fixed on the floor; only once he looked up towards the pulpit, and immediately under it he saw Antonio standing and listening most attentively to the sermon. This gave his mind another direction. Perhaps, thought he, the seed of truth will be sown in the heart of this young man, which will produce good fruit, and he could not conceal it from himself, that it would have been much better, if he had permitted his son to accompany them to church. He recollects how Henry himself had accounted for the conversion of so many Protestants in Rome, by saying that they would have been obliged to remain in the capital of Romanism so long without spiritual nourishment, so that they were forced of themselves to seek the supply of their religious wants in Romish churches, and thus gradually attached themselves to it. It occurred to him also, that Wilhelmina had apologized for the conduct of her brother, by maintaining that he never would have been unfaithful to his church, if he had remained in the bosom of his family, and had enjoyed the privileges of evangelical worship. He felt the force of this observation so strongly, that he regretted his vehemency, and with a tranquil mind he returned to his son.

"Henry, said he, I was wrong in forbidding you to attend our church. The sick man must not be prevented from going to the physician. I have nothing against your being present at our worship; I rather wish it. But do not mention the dispensation again. To worship God in a proper manner and to hear his word, cannot be authorised by any man, because no man has a right to forbid it. He who believes that such permission is necessary, plainly shows,

that instead of being a servant of God, he has become the slave of men. What is the object of your Pope's dispensation? Either it is right and good that you worship God with us, then you need no permission; or it is improper and injurious, then the Pope has no right to give it to you, and if he had, you have no right to make use of it."

Henry rejoiced that the tranquility of his father's mind was restored, and in apology only remarked, that he regarded the prohibition to visit any other than Catholic churches not as moral, but only as disciplinary,—that the Catholic church only thus cautions her members not to expose their faith to danger, and that a dispensation from this did not appear to him improper. The father thought that Henry's opinion of this subject was utterly erroneous, and that according to the principles of the Romish church respecting heresy, such a permission could only be compared to that which a general gives to his spies, occasionally to wear the uniform of the enemy, and to mingle with them as friends, but only for the purpose of deceiving and ensnaring them. But still he thought, that though Henry was in error, yet that he acted from the purest motives.

The mother who had been deeply pained at the vehemence of her husband, was now the more gratified at the reconciliation. Desirous of changing the subject of conversation, she asked Antonio, who just then entered the room, and whom she had observed at church, how he was pleased with the Protestant worship? "By the holy St. Januarius\* he cried out in Neapolitan ardour, I was exceedingly well pleased!"

MOTHER.—And why?

ANTONIO—Because I could understand it.

\*The patron saint of Naples, a portion of whose blood kept in a vial is annually exhibited to the multitude, who fall down and adore it!!! It is a chemical preparation of a red color, which dissolves by the warmth of the hand. This the priests know, but yet teach the people that it is the genuine blood of the Saint!—[Tr.]

MOTHER.—And that is, because you have learned the language of our country.

ANTONIO.—I do not mean that, but because here the worship is not performed in Latin, as with us, but in the language of the country.

MOTHER.—You are certainly joking, good Antonio ! how could worship be edifying to the people if it was performed in a language which they did not understand ?

HENRY.—Antonio speaks the truth, Mother. In the sacred services, particularly the mass, the church retains the Latin language, partly because it is rendered sacred by the high antiquity of the ritual, and partly because it is better suited to the holy mysteries. The people would only be disturbed in their devotion, if the ritual were celebrated in the language of the country, and they would have less reverence for the holy mysteries, which while they do not *understand*, yet they can *feel* their power in their hearts. Hence, the church does not allow the worship to be conducted in any other than the Latin language.

THE FATHER.—What language, my son, did the Saviour and the apostles use, when they taught and instituted the mysteries ?

HENRY.—Certainly the language of their country, that of Palestine, or perhaps the Greek, which was very commonly spoken by the people.

FATHER.—And in what language did the christians of the early centuries celebrate their religious service ?

HENRY.—I cannot deny that every congregation used the language of the country in which it was located ; the Greeks the Greek, the Latins the Latin, the Syrians the Syriac.

FATHER.—You see, dear Henry, that christians had a right to hold their worship and celebrate the sacraments in their mother tongue. This right we also have. That the western christians employed the Latin in their worship, was right, for it was the language of the country ; but that the German, English and French also use the Latin in wor-

ship, is a manifest perversion and gross impropriety. If ignorance of the language promotes devotion, or if any importance is to be attached to its antiquity, and men attach a sort of sacredness to it, then the language of Palestine, or at any rate the Greek, in which the New Testament was written, and the mysteries first celebrated, should be employed rather than the Latin. Why do they adhere so pertinaciously to the Latin ritual? does it not appear as though they were afraid that it should be understood by the laity?

**WILHELMINA.**—For my part I would not consent to be married out of a Latin ritual, for I would not know whether the priest was marrying or divorcing me. I should think that that which is unintelligible cannot awaken devotion. Would a person ignorant of English be more deeply moved if he saw an English representation of Hamlet and Macbeth, than if he witnesssd the performance of those master pieces in a German translation?

In the mean time, Antonio who had suddenly left the room, entered with a book, in which he was hastily turning over the leaves. It was the German translation of the New Testament by Van Ess. "I have here, he said to Henry, I have here found a passage which makes me doubtful whether our priests do right in holding their worship in Latin. Paul writes to the christians in Corinth, in his first epistle. (ch. ivx, 2.) "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him; however in the spirit he speaketh mysteries; but he that prophesieth speaketh unto men, to edification, and exhortation and comfort." v. 6. Now brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? v. 9. So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? *For ye shall speak into the air.* v. 13. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue, pray *that he may interpret.* v. 19. Yet in the church I had rather speak *five* words with my

understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than *ten thousand* words in an unknown tongue." The apostle, dear sir, certainly understood the matter well, and I know well, that he was right; for the German worship edified me much more than the Latin mass, which I do not understand.

Henry was taken by surprise; they all asked him where and how he had procured that book;—Antonio related the whole story; the parents, particularly the father, were pleased with the sound understanding of the young man, and exhorted him to read the word of God diligently, which would be of great advantage to him.

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## CHAPTER VI.

THE RELATION OF THE ROMISH CHURCH TO THE DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY—THE RELATION OF THE PROPITIATORY SACRAMENTS TO CHRISTIAN VIRTUE—PRIESTLY ABSOLUTION, JOHN xx. 23; MATT. xviii. 18.

The evening gave occasion to recommence the conversation on the subject of the change of Henry's religious principles. The father reminded them, that they had agreed to proceed at once to the main point, and discuss the question, in what relation the Evangelical as well as the Romish church stood to the design of Christianity? They seated themselves socially at the table, and before the conversation began, the mother secured the son against any probable ebullition of the father's passion. "Look upon your son, (said she) not as an apostate from our church, but as a Romanist from his birth, whom you desire to convert to the Evangelical church." This idea, the father also thought, would create tenderness and patience in his heart, which was already well disposed, and at the same time it awaken-

ed the hope, as he expressed it, that Henry would again find in his father's house that understanding, which he had lost in Rome. He also agreed to a suggestion which Wilhelmina made, that in quoting scripture passages they should use Van Ess's translation that all possible impartiality might be shown towards Henry.

They all soon agreed, that the object of Jesus was, to be the *Saviour* of men; for this his very name, Jesus, implies. They also agreed, that he became a Saviour of men in this, that he redeemed and delivered them from sin. For thus they read in Matt. i. 21. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." But when they discussed the question, *how* Jesus became a Saviour, and *what* must take place in the hearts of men to secure this salvation, then they differed in opinion. After a long conversation, they agreed to adhere to the declaration of the apostle Paul, for he certainly must have known what effect christianity was intended to have on the heathen to whom he preached it, and in what manner Jesus was to become to them a Saviour. He thus writes, Tit. ii. 11—14. The grace of God (in Christ) that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort."

The parties agreed, that here the apostle represents Jesus as a Saviour, not only from the *punishment* of sin, but that he *reforms* men and redeems them from the *service* of sin, and that his object, consequently the object of christianity, was, to lead men to a knowledge of God and his law, to excite them to the obedience of that law, or to virtue, and to secure for them, as thus *reformed*, the grace of God and eternal life.

This is, said Henry, precisely the doctrine of the Catholic church, and thus far it agrees with that of the Evangelical church. But I maintain, that in order to accomplish this object in the case of individual christians, just such an institution as the Catholic church is necessary, and that on the other hand, this object cannot be fulfilled by means of such an organization as the Evangelical church presents. The peculiarities of the Catholic church, which determine this matter, and in which she principally differs from the Evangelical, are the following. In her alone redemption can be found, for she was instituted by Christ and the apostles, and consequently, is the true church; she alone possesses the means of an infallibly correct knowledge of christian doctrine, a legitimate and valid priesthood, and therefore regularly consecrated, and lawfully appointed to teach and administer the sacraments; a legitimate arbiter of church government, (the Pope) and means of grace not dependent on the state of the mind in order to secure to believers the forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation. Hence she alone can fulfil the object of christianity, and redeem men from sin."

FATHER.—You say a great deal at once, dear Henry. We will consider it hereafter. I grant that your church has very many means to release men from the *punishment* of sin, but I maintain that for this very reason, she is altogether incompetent to deliver them from the *dominion* of sin. As she is continually absolving men from punishment, she does not wean them from sin, but rather encourages them in immorality.

HENRY.—But the Catholic church demands penance and contrition of all who desire to receive the benefit of her means of grace.

FATHER.—I know that well enough; but men are not yet thereby reformed! If a sinner does not perform the promised penance, but continues to sin on, can he again be absolved, if he goes to confession?

HENRY.—Certainly, if he again promises penance. For the holy council of Trent teaches, very expressly, (in the 14th session,) "Sinners can be absolved by the priest not only *once*, but *as often* as they penitently go to him."

FATHER.—But if he does not reform, and although often absolved by the priest, sins on until his death, will his last confession on his death bed, and the last absolution, or extreme unction secure salvation for him?

HENRY.—Undoubtedly; herein consists the extent of priestly power, that they, so long as body and soul are not separated, can yet bring the sinner into a state of grace.

FATHER.—Then you grant, my son, that your priests absolve the *unreformed*. Then if a man, though often promising reformation, yet never reforms, can be assured of the pardon of God and eternal life through the repeated absolution of the priest until his dying hour, it follows that reformation is not necessary to eternal life, but only occasional advice on the subject. In my view this is precisely as if the masters of a trade would certify that he was a travelled journeyman, who ten times pretended to set out on his tour, but always turned back at the gate of the city.\*

HENRY.—But, dear father, God also forgives as often as the sinner reforms, and the example of the thief on the cross shows, that sinners can receive pardon even on a dying bed, if they feel sincere contrition. So the Catholic priest only forgives those who truly repent, for the council of Trent says expressly, (14th session,) that the penitent must exhibit "a proper state of mind."

FATHER.—The sincere penitent, according to the scriptures, will certainly never find the way of grace closed against him. But the difference is this, that we direct him to the infallible God, the searcher of hearts, and tell him, that sorrow for sin which proceeds merely from fear of punishment, is not true and evangelical repentance, and can-

\*Every journeyman in Germany is obliged by law to travel and work in the principal towns and cities, before he can establish himself in business.—[Tr.]

not be acceptable to God, but that alone which arises from an internal hatred of sin, exhibited in abandoning sin, is well pleasing in his sight; but you direct the sinner to a fallible priest, who cannot see the heart, or know whether that "proper state of mind" exists, or at least can only be assured by the word and behaviour of the penitent, and yet absolves, which, as you think, is so powerful, that it will be always valid before God. Our ministers when they absolve those who confess, do not forgive their sins, but only declare to them the *divine promise* of pardon, console them by the assurances of the grace of God, only upon the condition, however, of sincere repentance.\* But with you, the efficacy of absolution, as well as of all the sacraments, depends not on the moral character of the christian, but on the power of the priest, and the service operates as you say, *ex opere operato*, that is, if it is only performed.

HENRY.—That is a great advantage of Catholic absolution, that its efficacy depends on the priest and his service, and not on the moral character and disposition of the penitent. The priest demands the external evidences of repentance, if he sees these, he absolves, and if he absolves then it is efficacious.

FATHER.—You perfectly establish what I said. In order to be saved, you require nothing more than a mere verbal acknowledgment of sin, or the "external evidences" of "a proper state of mind," upon which this efficacious absolution always follows. The journeyman need not even buckle his knapsack nor go beyond the city gate, but only repeatedly promise that he will travel, and it is just as good as if he had

\*In the Lutheran churches, on the day the special service preparatory to the Lord's Supper is performed, the minister propounds several questions to the communicants, to which they respond in an audible voice. This is called the confession. The minister then says, "Upon this humble confession, &c. I declare to you all, who have sincerely repented of your sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the divine promise of the forgiveness of your transgression in the name of the Father, &c. &c."—[Tr.]

travelled. This is very convenient for persons of high and low degree, who indeed wish to die happy, but also wish to spend their whole lives in dissipation. In what sense then does your Catholic church redeem men *from sin*? She forgives your sins without end, and secures you from the *punishment* of them in eternity, without it being at all necessary that you should be delivered from the *dominion* of sin. You can tranquilly indulge your lusts and desires all your days; the priest who carries the keys of heaven will without fail unlock the gates for you in your dying hour. Do you not see, that thus the genuine reformation of men is really superfluous, and that your church does not promote the object of christianity, which is, first to reform men and make them new creatures in Christ Jesus, *and then only to promise* them forgiveness and eternal life. Is it not plain, that the Romish church is an institution which delivers men *not* from the dominion of sin, but rather lulls the consciences of sinners to sleep, and yet after all by the power of the priest, conveys the most depraved to heaven? Do you think there is any thing great and efficacious in this priestly power?—no, no, my son, it is destructive of all morality!

HENRY.—I must freely grant, that the Catholic doctrine of the efficacy of priestly absolution and the sacraments, may greatly tend to encourage the sinner in transgression; but yet we also insist strongly on christian reformation.

FATHER.—But all that will be fruitless, if the sinner believes that the priest can at any time forgive him all, and that his absolution must be acknowledged as valid by God. Thus most manifestly you make God submissive to the priests, whose declarations he must obey, even when they absolve men whom God's righteousness could not absolve, or when they refuse absolution to men, whom the grace of God would certainly forgive. It is truly foolish and shocking at the same time, that in your church men teach and believe that God has surrendered his judgment into the hands of fallible priests, who have to contend with their own passions, and yet, who according to their own contracted views

and the ever changing emotions of the human mind, can bestow grace or invoke wrath, and consequently, eternal salvation or everlasting misery upon their brethren. Forgiveness is a transaction between the divine love and the heart of the sinner. The sinful priest dare not interfere between them, and prescribe to the love of God, whose sins should be forgiven, and whose should be retained. This is superstition, in which God is made an idol, which draws away the heart of the sinner from God and fixes it upon man, the priest.

MOTHER.—In this your father is perfectly right, dear Henry. O listen not to the voice of a priesthood, which would prescribe rules and usages to the divine righteousness, what is proper to be done and what to be left undone; but hear the voice of the Saviour and his apostles, who promise no man admission into the kingdom of heaven, who is not truly reformed and leads a pious life. Does not your Saviour say, John iii. 3. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;” and does being “born again” mean, confessing to the priest or undergoing penance? Hear how the apostle Paul explains this new birth. He says, (Ephes. iv. 21, &c.) “If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” The apostle Peter also, whose successor the Pope pretends to be, demands of christians the reformation of their whole life, and is not satisfied with contrition and penances. “As obedient children, he writes (I Pet. i. 14.) not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which calleth you is holy, so be ye holy in *all manner* of conversation.”

HENRY.—But, dear mother, the Catholic church insists equally as much as the Evangelical on true holiness of life. She only maintains, that Christ gave to the priesthood the power of absolving sinners, so soon as they manifest con-

trition. For the word of the Lord, (John xx. 23.) which he spake to his disciples, certainly empowers the priesthood, who are the successors of the apostles, to forgive or to retain sins. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost ! whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Or is it not plain enough, when the Saviour says, Matt. xviii. 18. "Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Here there is no escape; here you must unavoidably acknowledge that the priesthood has the power of unlocking heaven, and delivering men from the punishment of sin.

FATHER.—You are altogether wrong, my son. As it respects the latter passage, the sense is plain enough from its connection with the two preceding verses, 15—17, in which the apostles are instructed how they shall act, not when they hear confession, for that they did not do, but when they had contentious and troublesome persons in the church. They were first to admonish such privately and then in the presence of several witnesses. "And if he neglect to hear thee, (he says in v. 17,) tell it unto the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and publican ; verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, &c." Here, my son, you see plainly, that the Saviour only says, that it will be valid before him and his Heavenly Father, when the church excludes from her communion an unworthy and persevering sinner, or again receives him. There is no reference at all to forgiveness of sins before God, or to release from punishment in eternity, but only to exclusion from, or restoration to the christian communion.

HENRY.—I see plainly that the connection of the words perfectly justifies your explanation of this passage. But how is it with the other? In that *forgiveness of sins* is expressly mentioned !

FATHER.—That is true, but it proves nothing, for the *absolution* of the priesthood. I believe, and many learned

men of our church, for instance, Reinhard, Morus and many others, who highly venerated the bible, also believed that here "the forgiveness of sins" is to be understood of the miraculous cures, which the apostles after the example of Christ were to effect by the power of the Holy Ghost. According to Matt. ix. 2. John ix. 2, diseases were considered as punishments of sins, so that a miraculous cure could be regarded as a forgiveness of sins, inasmuch as the punishment then ceased. Thus Jesus often says to the sick whom he healed; "thy sins are forgiven,—sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee!" You will find an example in Acts, ch. iii. where Peter healed a lame man, and acknowledged, v. 12, that he did not "make this man well by his own power or holiness" but God through him.

**HENRY.**—Although your explanation is plausible, yet in my view, it is too far fetched to convince me.

**FATHER.**—I will not force it on you, my son. But even if this "forgiving sins" is to be understood of pardon before God, it still proves nothing for priestly absolution in confession. Where does Jesus say in this passage, that absolution can be received *more than once*—that it can be repeated at every confession? He does not even at all say, that forgiveness of sins is such an *external act*, which can be repeated at the pleasure of the priest. Without forcing a meaning the words can be thus interpreted; whomever ye pardon for what they have done against me and the kingdom of God, and re-admit into my church, them will I also pardon. At any rate, the passage affords not the least ground to justify the *repeated* absolution of sinful men. For John i. Ep. iii. 5, 6, expects and demands of christians that they sin no more habitually, and of course need no absolution, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin; whoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him." But the same apostle directs christians, if they sin, not to priestly absolution but to God and Christ. He thus writes, i. Ep. i. 9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and

just to forgive us our sins," ch. ii. I. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." Finally, dear son, you must certainly acknowledge that in both the passages under discussion, the Saviour is speaking *to his apostles only*, and that consequently, the power which he bestows upon them, whatever be its nature, is *only personal*. That they *could* confer this power on others, yea, that it is at all communicable, is not established by a single word.

**HENRY.**—But the words of the Saviour to his apostles at the last supper; "this do in remembrance of me," the evangelical church considers as a command to all christians in every age; why then should not the power of forgiving sins also be extended to the successors of the apostles?

**FATHER.**—Your conclusion is very singular, my son; it is this; if *one* command given to the apostles is binding on all christians, then *all* the other commands are equally binding on all christians. If that were so, why is it that your priests alone forgive the sins of the laity? Then each layman could forgive another, and a layman could also forgive the sins of a priest. These words, "this do in remembrance of me," as they were addressed to the apostles, would not of themselves, afford us any ground for the celebration of the Lord's supper. - But they would not only, because it is the duty of every christian gratefully to commemorate the death of Jesus and thus follow the example of the apostles, but also on this account, because we see from the New Testament, that the apostles established that ordinance at the same time for all other christians, and that immediately after the death of Jesus, by their direction it was introduced into the churches. But the power of forgiving sins, if it were really conferred on the apostles, was in its nature not capable of being communicated to all christians, or any portion of them. We read not a single word about it, that the apostles conferred it on others; and often as the rights and privileges of elders or Bishops are extensively mentioned in the New Testament, not the slightest intimation is given, that they had the pow-

er and should exercise it, of forgiving sins. We know moreover from ecclesiastical history (with which every educated christian should make himself acquainted) that confession and absolution had their origin in the *church penitence*, which those who had been excommunicated were obliged to submit to.

HENRY.—And what was that?

FATHER.—Those whose lives were irregular, and gave offence to the church were excluded, and were obliged, if they wished to be restored, not only to confess their sins *publicly* before the whole congregation, but submit to certain penances, or exhibit external signs of the sincerity of their repentance. Thus it was in the early centuries. But as the churches were multiplied, especially when by the conversion of the emperors, christianity spread through the whole Roman empire at the beginning of the fourth century, this public confession and penitence was gradually changed for a private one before the bishop and his ministers, and absolution, as well as remittance of the penances, followed from these alone.\* In the progress of time your auricular confession grew out of this, and this extended to all sins, even the most secret. Absolution no longer referred to the pardon of the church, but to the forgiveness of sins before God, and release from punishment in eternity. This is the origin of your confession and absolution, and what the Romish church still maintains concerning the valid

\*A new method also of proceeding with penitents was introduced into the Latin church. For grievous offenders, who had formerly been obliged to confess their guilt in the face of the congregation, were now delivered from this mortifying penalty, and obtained from Leo the Great a permission to confess their crimes *privately* to a priest appointed for that purpose. By this change of the ancient discipline, one of the greatest restraints upon the licentiousness, and the only remaining barrier of chastity, was entirely removed, and the actions of christians were subject to no other scrutiny than that of the clergy; a change which was frequently convenient for the sinner, and also advantageous in many respects to the sacred order.

Mosheim. Cent. v. ch. 4. part. iii.—(Ta.)

authority of priestly absolution is altogether an abuse and a wretched imposition.

HENRY.—Pardon me, dear father, if I call into question this account of the origin of the sacrament of penance. The holy council of Trent expressly says; (14th session, ch. 5, of Penance.) "As secret sacramental confession is recommended with great unanimity by the holiest and most ancient fathers of the church, and was practiced by the holy church *from the beginning*, it is a calumny, when men are not afraid to aver, that it has no divine authority, but is only a human invention, and was first established by the Lateran council."

FATHER.—In this matter the holy council is undoubtedly in error. I will leave you to read through the writings of the holiest and most ancient fathers of the church, such as Hermes, Ignatius, Clemens of Rome, Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria, and even the Apostolical constitutions,\* and wait to see whether you can find a single passage which confirms the Romish Auricular Confession. They all treat merely of the penitence which the *lapsed* and the excommunicated were obliged to show before the bishop and the other ministers, and refer the words "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall also be bound in heaven," &c. exclusively to the right of excommunicating unworthy members from the church, and of restoring penitents. But they say not a word in favor of the doctrine of your church, that the priest has power to release sinners from the punishment of the future world.†

HENRY.—Good; dear father, I will read those works, and will give you notice of the result.

\* The eight books of the Apostolical Constitutions are the work of some austere and melancholy author, who having taken it into his head to reform the christian worship, which he looked upon as degenerated from its original purity, made no scruple to prefix to his rules the names of the apostles, that thus they might be more speedily and favorably received. *Mosheim, cent. 1. ch. ii. sec. 19.*—[Tr.]

† See Appendix No. 1.

**FATHER.**—That will be of great benefit to you, for you will find that in this point, as well as in many others, the oft repeated confident assertion of the Romish theologians, that the ancient church taught the doctrines of the present Romish church, is altogether without foundation.

**MOTHER.**—As respects myself, I do not care for your learned investigations, but adhere in all simplicity to the declarations of the Saviour and his apostles. In them I have never yet read a word of the sacramental confession and priestly absolution. According to the scriptures, the justification of a sinner is a much more simple affair. I nowhere find that God, who as the searcher of hearts, alone can perform the office of an Almighty Judge, has surrendered it to sinful men, who might spare him the trouble of judging and forgiving. The prodigal son (Luke xv. 12.) simply returns to his father and prays for forgiveness; and the father receives him with open arms, without first having him absolved by the priest. And where the Lord describes the judgment (Matt. xxv. 31, &c.) which he himself will hold and will surrender to no priest, he only asks whether they fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, but not whether they were absolved and anointed with oil before they died. On this word of my Lord I rely more securely than upon all the indulgences and absolutions of men.

**FATHER.**—Your mother has come to the point, my son. It is certainly clear, that God cannot resign his office as judge to sinful men, who themselves need grace and cannot see the heart, and that as respects the “binding and loosing” of the priesthood, it refers only to the excommunication and restoration of church members, that is, to their pardon before men. But it is equally clear, that the Saviour is not satisfied “that a man at confession should be in a proper state of mind,” and be absolved, but that he demands the *whole* life devoted to piety; but nothing more.

**HENRY.**—I confess that I am at a loss how to answer you. But do not overwhelm me; give me time to think of

the matter more thoroughly; perhaps it will become clearer to me.

FATHER.—With great pleasure, my son; only seek the truth honestly.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### MIXED MARRIAGE—THE CONDEMNATION OF HERETICS—WHAT IS DEMANDED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN ETERNAL LIFE.

The next evening Henry acknowledged that he had not yet found an answer to the arguments of yesterday, and begged that they might in the mean time proceed to some other subject. The father observed, that it would be well if Wilhelmina's intended husband (he was lately settled as assistant minister in L) also took part in these discussions, especially that he might afford his aid in those parts which related to church history and biblical interpretation. Henry had no objections, but still observed, that then the parties would be unequal, for he had no one on his side. The father remarked, that Henry also possessed the advantages of a knowledge of the ancient languages, of history and philosophy. At the same time he promised, that the young minister would only be appealed to when he and the mother found it necessary. Henry was satisfied, and the father sportively asked, whether Wilhelmina had any thing against it. "I shall be much pleased, she replied, to have an opportunity now, of forming some idea of the extent of Bernhard's learning, for our conversations have not been of the scholastic order. I will only beg, however, that Henry is not to make a Romanist of him; for then, much as I love him, I would most certainly not marry him."

HENRY—(Feelingly)—O what intemperate zeal! Cannot then a Catholic be an amiable man, and worthy of your af-

sections? Does love inquire about confessions of faith? You do not marry the confession of a man, but himself.

**WILHELMINA.**—Yes, but dear brother, because I wish to have the whole man, soul and body, his confession of faith is to me a very important matter. Whether men can explain what love is, that the philosophers may settle. I know it not. Bernhard told me, that an old philosopher was of opinion, that the soul originally was divided into two halves, which sought each other in life, and when they found each other, united into one. This explanation does not appear to me to be wrong, for there is such an elective affinity of souls in true love, in which not only the hand and ring are given, but also the heart. But a Romanist and an Evangelical soul, if each is faithful to its creed, must repel each other; for the former regards the latter as sunk in ruinous error, and the latter holds the former as obscured by narrow prejudices, and filled with a superstitious fear of the power of the priesthood. How shall they be one? Either they repel each other, or the one draws the other over to its faith.

**HENRY.**—You contradict all experience, dear sister. In countries of promiscuous faith, you also find promiscuous marriages very numerous, and they agree happily.

**WILHELMINA.**—That may be. I am only speaking my own sentiments, according to which such a marriage can only be agreeable in case one party or both are either irreligious, or indifferent, or unfeeling, and the marriage only regarded as a civil contract, or entered into for the sake of fortune and place, or—and this may often be the case—if the Romish party does not believe all that the priests have established as articles of faith and is in heart a Protestant.

**HENRY.**—But why cannot the faith of both churches be endured in matrimony? Cannot one party leave the other in the undisturbed enjoyment of his faith?

**WILHELMINA.**—The Protestant can well think so, but not the Romanist. The latter, because your church declares all heretics as eternally cursed, cannot cease trying to convert his or her Protestant partner to the Romish faith, and

must be sadly troubled if this is not accomplished. How can the Romanist be one heart and one soul with another devoted to eternal misery?

MOTHER.—I agree perfectly with Wilhelmina; especially as it respects the education of children. Each party will wish to have the children brought up to his or her confession, and must wish it if they are true to the faith of their church. It will be intolerable to the evangelical party, and an everlasting thorn in the heart, if the children are seen brought up to a blind faith, to convictions, which are regarded as erroneous, to practices, which must be considered as superstitious. Equally intolerable must it be to the Romish party, if it is seen that the children are instructed in soul destroying error, and led directly down to the bottomless pit. There can be no peace there. That which pleases the one saddens the other; that which is cheering to the one fills the other with despair. That person alone can be contented in such a situation, who is totally indifferent about christianity and religion.

FATHER.—You will not take it ill, Henry, if I also utter precisely the same sentiments. It would be intolerable to me, if I had a wife, who with superstitious anxiety, would run away to mass, when she should attend to her children at home; who would pray to the saints, when she should be thinking of God; who would conscientiously tattle to the confessor all the secrets of matrimony; who would mortify herself by fasting and penance; who would sympathise with me as a miserable and accursed heretic; whom, as the secret confederate of proselyting priests, I would always have to watch, lest the children might be seduced to Romanism; with whom on the Lord's day and other festivals, I could not go to the same church; by whom, finally, I would always be secretly tormented about taking care of my soul's salvation according to her opinion, and becoming a Romanist.

HENRY.—O, dear father, how black you paint this affair! I do not believe that experience will establish your positions.

FATHER.—That you only say, because you as yet have no experience. Only read the Romish writings, and you will every where find proof, that your priests enforce it as a conscientious duty on the Catholic party in marriage, to bring up all the children in the Catholic faith. They demand this promise when about to solemnize a promiscuous marriage, and will perform the rite for no couple, who do not make this promise; they absolve no man or woman at confession, if they do not promise to exert themselves to the utmost, to lead their children to the Romish church. And this is not only done by a few of the most zealous, but by all; they are so instructed, they must do it, agreeably to the directions of the Pope.

HENRY.—You are certainly wrong in this matter, dear father. Then the father of the christian world, the Pope, must regard Protestants not as christians, though they are his children, yet straying, but as heathen, and as it were, infected with the plague.

FATHER.—My poor son, how little you know of your own church! (He brings a book, "Authentic Correspondence of the court of Rome and the French government, translated into German, by Kassler, 1814," and read the following, on page 158, from a circular of the former Pope, dated Feb. 27th, 1809, to the French priesthood.) "Several among you have prayed me to bestow upon you the power of granting liberty to such persons to marry, one of whom acknowledges the Catholic faith, and the other holds to a *heretical doctrine*. But I believe it is known to you that the true Catholic church has always disapproved of marriages with heretics; for the church *abhors* them, as my predecessor, Pope Clemens XI. said, on account of the great sin, and the no small *danger of the soul* which they occasion, and almost on the same grounds that she has forbidden the marriage of christians with *unbelievers*, has she also discouraged Catholics from marrying heretics, because it is *not a pious act*. Hence it is very much to be regretted that there should be among Catholics any, who are so led

away by shameful passion, as not to be shocked at such marriages so highly to be disapproved of, which the holy mother, the church, has always reprobated and forbidden. For besides the great danger of a perverted mind which the Catholic party is exposed to, and that *the child which is to be brought up cannot under these circumstances be well enough attended to*, it is also very difficult to live together in domestic concord, without being united in faith."

What the Pope here says of the discord which is created by these intermarriages is very true, and it should determine a prudent Protestant not to marry a person of the Catholic faith, because the principles of the Catholic party would prevent every thing like domestic harmony. You also see from this, my son, that your church abhors such marriages, and that the apprehension that the Catholic party, and the children could not be sufficiently guarded against the influence of Protestant principles, induces Catholic priests to exert all their efforts in the conversion of the Protestant party, or at least the children: Hence, they are at liberty to solemnize such a marriage only upon the condition, that the children (*yet to be born,*) be brought up to the Catholic church. This you may learn from a proclamation of the king of Prussia, dated March 2d, 1819, in which he declared, that the conduct of the Romish clergy (in the Rhine provinces) in requiring a promise, that Catholic persons who wish to marry Protestants should bring up the children of both sexes to the Catholic religion," is not to be allowed. This is proof sufficient, that in such a marriage the Protestant party can have no peace. You also see, that the father of the christian world, as you call the Pope, regards us as nothing better than heathen and infected with a plague, in whose company a good Catholic must be "shocked" because of our daring impiety, and amongst whom he exposes his "soul to no small danger." And what is it that makes us such abominable beings? Do we deny Christ? Do we allow or connive at licentiousness? Do we refuse obedience to the government? Nothing of all these! we

only do not believe in the Pope, nor in the power of the priests, nor in the seven sacraments, nor in the mass and the efficacy of holy water. Is this sufficient ground to regard good christians, who strive after the example of Christ to be perfect in love, as worthy of abhorrence, as destroyers of souls, as nothing better than heathen? But all this proceeds from your uncharitable principles, which irretrievably condemn all to everlasting death, who do not believe in the Pope and the priesthood, and this principle your clergy have established only because in it they find the surest support of their power.

HENRY.—I must confess, that this rigor of their principles on mixed marriages was unknown to me, and that I do not feel inclined to justify them. But as respects the sentence of condemnation, which the Catholic church declares against all heretics, and consequently all Protestants, that is certainly true; she excludes them all from eternal salvation, and absolutely recognizes no grace for them. It was this severe condemnation which particularly brought me to a stand, when I first adopted the Catholic faith; my heart thought of *you!* It was equally as impossible for me to condemn you, as to regard you as condemned. After a long conversation with my friend Rossi, on this subject, he at length solved the difficulty which harrassed me, and my mind was restored to peace. The Catholic church, said he, as the only true church,—the only one instituted by Christ, must hold every other church establishment as false; and as the scriptures teach that only those who belong to the kingdom of Christ, or to the church will be saved, she must consequently declare all who are not Catholics, as damned. But in doing this, she only maintains her dignity and value. Still she does not deny, that God according to his grace may also bestow eternal salvation upon individual christians of other church communions, who are particularly pious and zealous in doing good. But yet she cannot determine this, nor establish it as an article of faith, for it is dependent on the extraordinary grace of God. The

church does not know what God will do; she only knows that agreeably to the way of salvation which God has published, he who is out of the church is also out of salvation, and this she acknowledges; the *secret* counsel of God respecting the salvation of men, who are out of the church, she commits to the divine grace, and avoids a positive declaration about it, partly because she knows nothing about it, and partly because such a declaration would only tend to confirm men in their folly and error.

FATHER.—Your objection to the position does honor to your heart, but your acquiescence finally in this distinction speaks but little for the soundness of your head. Where has your church granted liberty for such a private opinion? Whatever your church, or rather the priests, as the lords and tutors of the church teach, that you as a layman must believe, consequently you must believe that we are all damned; for this your church teaches most expressly. She does not allow any private opinion; for that is heresy, when a person maintains any opinion, which is different from the unalterably established doctrines of the church. Your friend Rossi deceived you. He never would have dared to declare publicly what he told you privately. If private opinion is allowed in one, must it not be allowed in others? Could you entertain a different opinion from the church on the sacraments, the power of the priests, or purgatory, without being a heretic?

HENRY.—It is true, that liberty of opinion does not extend so far.

FATHER.—Then you see that the *professed* liberty of thinking what you please about the damnation of heretics as only a *pretended* one, which your church condemns and must condemn. The Romish catechism says expressly, “As this is a church (the Romish church) which cannot err, because she is guided by the Holy Ghost; *then it follows that all other professed churches are guided by the spirit of the devil and maintain the most corrupting errors both of faith and practice.*”

MOTHER.—Can you really believe, dear Henry, that God will condemn a man, because he rather trusts Christ and his declarations than the Pope, the apostles rather than bishops, the doctrines of the New Testament rather than the decrees of your councils? Only read how simply our Saviour declares, what is necessary for eternal life. He says, John xvii. 3, "And this is life eternal; that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Further, John iii. 36, "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not in the Son, shall not see life." And in ch. v. 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life." See, my dearest son, how consoling this simple word of the Lord is to the christian. He demands nothing else than faith in the true God, in himself, as the messenger of God, and obedience to his moral commandments. He no where demands faith in the artificial doctrines, which councils and Popes have established, and which the unlearned, and perhaps also the learned, cannot understand. It has always thrilled me to read in Acts xvi. 25, &c. about the jailor that came trembling to Paul and fell at his feet, asking, "what must I do to be saved?" Who immediately answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." Either Paul deceived him, or faith in the Pope, the priesthood, the mass, purgatory and other things are not necessary to salvation, and your priests condemn us with most uncharitable injustice.\*

FATHER.—Just so, precisely. For we believe as you do, in one true God, and in Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. Both these doctrines are founded in the apostolical, the Nicene, and Athanasian creeds; and these our church has also adopted, so that in these points we have your doctrine precisely. If Jesus in John xvii. 3, distinguishes these two points, as those which men must believe in order to be

\*See Appendix No. 2.

saved; then you make Christ a deceiver, when you would eternally condemn us on account of other doctrines, which your priests have established. Verily we do not need your affected sympathy, when you say that God may perhaps save a few of us, by his unrevealed and uncovenanted grace. We know certainly, that we will be saved, if we obey the word of God.

HENRY.—I must acknowledge the force of that declaration of Christ. But there is something still, which prevents me from agreeing with you entirely. It impressed me deeply when Rossi first introduced it,—it is this, there can be but *one* true church, that this is the Roman Catholic church, and that consequently, salvation can be found in her communion alone.

FATHER.—That subject we will discuss when we meet again, and invite the presence of Bernhard. In the mean time, my son, believe this firmly, that your church does not thereby serve the object of christianity, which in general is, to make men moral, when she without respect to their moral character condemns all who do not believe her doctrines, and thus makes salvation depend merely on opinions of faith and the observance of certain practices.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

ANTONIO—MATT. xix. 16, 19 —INFLUENCE OF THE CATHOLIC SACRAMENTS IN COMPOSING AND COMFORTING THE MIND.

The next morning whilst Antonio was performing his duties in his master's room, he gradually led the conversation to the subject of the bible, and finally asked Henry whether he had ever read the New Testament. When Henry replied that he had been acquainted with it from his youth, Antonio expressed his great joy, and added, that he hoped Henry

would now answer several questions, which for some time had been revolving in his mind. "No religious scruples, I hope?" asked Henry, with a degree of ill humor. "Yes, they are," answered Antonio. I find not a word about so many things, which from my youth up I have been taught to consider as essential to christianity, that I really am very doubtful whether every thing is true, whoever may have introduced it. You would very much oblige me, by giving me some information on these points, which you, as a gentleman of education, and certainly well instructed in your youth, are so well qualified to do.

**HENRY.**—You ask too much of me, Antonio. I was educated in my youth for the Lutheran church, and have been a member of the Orthodox Roman Church but one year. I am myself but a young convert,—I am yet learning and I cannot solve your difficulties on all these points.

**ANTONIO.**—I well know that you became a Catholic only last year. You then made a real leap of it. I have all the trouble in the world to continue a Catholic, and I wish that you would help me. That you must certainly be able to do, inasmuch as all that now disturbs me must have occurred to your mind, but which you so easily overcame.

**HENRY.**—Go, Antonio, drive these things from you mind, and adhere in pious simplicity to your paternal faith.

**ANTONIO.**—Pardon me, sir; this good advice you did not follow yourself.

**HENRY.**—There you are certainly right. But I had studied, and was therefore well acquainted with the learned controversies of the theologians. But you lack all preparatory knowledge.

**ANTONIO.**—Ah! since I have several times read the New Testament, I do not appear to myself to be as ignorant as formerly. True, I find some things in it, which I do not understand, because I am not learned; but the discourses of Jesus I understand very well, and I perceive that it is not at all hard to learn from the Scriptures, what is to be believed and done in order to be a true Christian and assured

of eternal life. (With excitement) I do not at all see why among us the reading of the bible is forbidden to the people.

HENRY.—But how many a one has become heterodox by the reading of the Scriptures! Take good care, that you do not fill your head with foolish notions.

ANTONIO.—Heterodox? does that mean to be foolish in our notions of faith?

HENRY.—Not exactly that, but it means to believe differently from the general doctrine of the church.

ANTONIO.—Then, truly, that has already happened to me—I am heterodox, as you call it, and for that very reason I want you to clear the matter up. But give yourself no uneasiness about my foolish notions? I can assure you, that the doubts, which have occurred to me by reading the New Testament, do not trouble me, but rather that which I have learned from it, makes me a happier, and as I think, a better man. At least since that time I am always in good humour! have you not observed it?

HENRY.—Well, what have you learned that makes you so happy?

ANTONIO.—But—perhaps you will laugh at me.—

HENRY.—Then for once you were foolish in your faith.

ANTONIO.—Well, if you will have it, then listen!—It is the passage here in Matt. xix. 16, 19. And behold, one came and said unto him, good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God; but if thou will enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, which? Jesus said, thou shall do no murder. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother, and, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. This passage, sir, has made me very happy. Hear, how it came!

It was about six years ago, when in Naples we were celebrating the holy week and good Friday. My mind was quite full of the sufferings and death of the Lord, and I was

so distressed and melancholy, that I could no longer remain in the streets of the city, but went out in a southern direction towards St. Elmo where an extensive prospect of Naples and the sea is presented. There I laid down under a tree. All was silent around me, the sun was sinking in glorious majesty beneath the distant waves of the sea, and the blue canopy of the high heavens every moment became darker above me. There, thought I,—is now the Redeemer in his splendor and joy; and no earthworm Pharisees or Jewish priests can again obscure his glory or mar his happiness. But where is the heaven, which received the Saviour after his sufferings, and whither I shall also go to eternal joy and everlasting rest!—I looked up—as far as my eye could reach, but there were no limits, my vision stretched farther and still farther, my thoughts penetrated farther still; but immensity was there.

I could imagine nothing. My thoughts fled from me. Only an unutterable longing after the life of the blessed remained as a deep fixed sorrow in my soul. The father of light, the sun, had gone down; the crimson clouds and sky began to grow pale; gray night approached from the east, the evening star soon glittered in the west, brighter—and still brighter, until like a pure consecrated lamp it burned in silvery brightness on the face of heaven. May not heaven, I thought in my ignorance, be located in this beautiful star! The paradise of the blessed may well be displayed in such pure, undimmed glory. In spirit I elevated myself from the earth to this enchanting paradise, and wandered under its trees with angels and saints and my beloved parents. How happy I felt! I plucked fruit from the tree of knowledge, and ignorance and folly fell like scales from my eyes. I ate of the tree of life and felt, that henceforth I would not grow old,—that sickness and death would have no more dominion over me,—that I would flourish in immortal youth. I was blessed indeed;—I forgot the world. It was the happiest hour of my life! But the coolness of the night dew awakened me from my dream, and brought me back again

to the earth.—Then it appeared to me, as though I had lost paradise for ever; I was Adam, as he was driven out of the garden of happiness. To return—to return was the ardent longing of my soul. But which way leads thither? who will give me security that I will find it? “Ah! I cried out in agony—if thou O Redeemer, didst yet wander on earth, or if I had lived in the days of thy earthly pilgrimage, that I might have asked *thee*, that I might have heard from *thy* lips, what I must do to obtain eternal life!” That was indeed an inconsiderate desire! I said to myself it was foolish. But it clung to my soul, and it was awakened very often afterwards at the sight of the evening star, just as a longing for home at the remembrance of our native land. But see! in the days when the Saviour wandered among mortals, a young man felt the same longing that I did, and he approached the Lord with the question, what shall I do, that I may have eternal life?—O how I bless the holy evangelist, that he recorded the answer which the Saviour gave! Now I also have asked him; and he has also directed me: hence it is that I am so happy.

HENRY.—(Thoughtfully) Good Antonio! I also once looked upon the evening star and felt the same longing. Why was I not able to find the answer, which you have found! I was directed to the church.

ANTONIO.—(With earnestness) To the church, to Rome you need not betake yourself. Believe, sir, that heaven will not continue silent, if the heart sincerely asks. When I on that evening looked up to the high vault of heaven, which encompasses sea and land and stretches into immensity, Italy and holy Rome were to me only a miserable clod of earth, St. Peter's church a molehill, and the sacrificing priest a poor creature like myself, equally distant from the evening star and equally infirm. From him, from him, who came from heaven, and again ascended to heaven, did I desire to hear, how I also might reach that abode of bliss.

HENRY.—(Collected) But why, Antonio, had you no confidence in the church, which prefigures and visibly represents

the invisible church of heaven, and to which the Saviour delegated the power of securing paradise to the faithful by means of the sacraments.

ANTONIO.—I knew and now well know all that the church teaches and promises. But since that time her consolations have appeared to me very melancholy, richly fraught with fear and alarm. Therefore they could never cheer me, but I only became more distressed and perplexed. Ah sir, to the sincere Catholic who desires to save his soul, it is a work of anguish and misery. For only see! according to the Catholic faith, we by birth belong to the kingdom of the devil, who retains us in his power, until the priest delivers us from him at baptism through the influence of exorcism. That is already something terrible to me, to think that I ever was in the power of the devil, without knowing a word about it. Ah! how great is the advantage I have with my Saviour! He called little children to him, who were yet unbaptized, kissed and blessed them, and said, ‘the kingdom of heaven is theirs,’ and all who wish to enter the kingdom of heaven, must become as innocent children. But even baptism does not yet secure me against the wiles of the devil. The sacrament of confirmation must be added, of which the Romish catechism says; “it fortifies us against the temptations of the flesh, the world and the devil.” I believe indeed, that confirmation is good, because the church has established it; but I find in my New Testament not a word that Jesus and the Apostles confirmed the baptized in the same manner that the Roman priests do. But still this protection is not sufficient to secure the grace of God and eternal life. The sacrament of holy confession must now be used, at least once a year. The Holy Council of Trent says, that at confession the priests are, “judges of sinners and their sins, and in the stead of God and Christ.” They can absolve or refuse it, and to whom they refuse it, upon him sin and its punishment rest, to him the gate of heaven is closed, and baptism and confirmation are of no avail. Ah! dear sir, confession often distressed me exceedingly!

I thought in my simplicity, why has the Almighty God set up a man as judge between me and Him? and that too in a matter in which I offended only Him, the Almighty and not the priest? why dare he not forgive me, if the priest should please to refuse me absolution? He is certainly merciful, but only when the priest declares he shall be merciful!!—Here I was brought to a stand, and I was always very sorry to think, that the great God held us poor laymen in such low esteem as not to receive our confession, nor to judge and absolve us himself. But since I have read what our Saviour says of the prodigal son, how the father received and forgave him, all my apprehensions have been quieted. But the misery is not yet at an end. For if the priest does absolve me and I begin a new and christian life, the church still commands me to do works of penance in order to appease the divine wrath, such as fasting, giving alms, saying prayers and many other such things. The Holy Council of Trent says expressly; (in canon 13th, Session 14th,) “he who denies this and says the best repentence is a new life, *let him be accursed.*” But my Saviour says in that passage, (Matt. xix. 16, 19.) that I shall only keep the commandments in order to be saved.

But even if I have diligently performed all those works of penance, and besides all this, lived a christian life, yet I still need the last sacrament, or extreme unction. This has the efficacy of expiating minor sins and of driving away the devil in the hour of death. “For—says the Holy Council (14th session) although the devil embraces every opportunity during our life to devour our souls; yet there is no period in which he so zealously employs all his his wiles to destroy us, and to rob us of our confidence in the divine mercy, as when he sees we are about to die.” This doctrine, dear sir, always alarmed me very much. What a miserable being man is, that even baptism, confirmation, absolution, penance and a pious life, cannot so far secure him against Satan, as to prevent him from dragging away the soul even on a dying bed, unless the helping hand

of the priest is present with his holy oil! Truly, the merciful God has not made it an easy thing for the sincere Catholic to obtain mercy from him!

But notwithstanding this, the terrors are still not at an end. Our catechism and the church teach; "there is also a *purgatory* in which the souls of the pious will be tormented for a fixed period and be thereby atoned for, that an entrance into eternal happiness may be opened for them, into which nothing unclean can come." Of what avail will it be to me, if from my birth to my death, I have conscientiously submitted to all the sacraments? The priest must now read masses for souls, through the efficacy of which he will deliver me from purgatory, so that if my soul has already departed from the world, it is not yet delivered over to the mercy of God alone, but it needs the sacrifice of the priest, which moves that mercy! Hence, I think, that the soul of a sincere Catholic is indeed to be pitied. In life and in death it is not in the hands of God, but in the hands of the priest.

HENRY.—But, Antonio, do you not see, that it is particularly consoling to us when oppressed by a sense of sin, to know that the church has so many means of grace, which accompany us all through life? Who need be dismayed, since the church so securely shelters him, when even the departed soul is not left to itself, but is conducted to the gates of paradise by the holy sacrifice of the mass.

ANTONIO.—But it is exactly this painful system of fortifying and securing my soul, that creates in me the feeling, as though it were like a besieged town, in which breaches were continually made, the enemy pouring in here and there, and reluctantly driven back by the garrison. By all this, I feel myself cut off from God, just as a besieged city from the governor of the country, and just as dependent on the power of the protecting priests as such a town is on the good will of the garrison. There is no certain security there. I must be in constant dread.

HENRY.—Fool! the power of the church is so infallible, that her sacraments afford the strongest security against all the attacks and manœuvres of the enemy of the soul, so that you can be in perfect peace, and may compare yourself not to a besieged city, but to one that is delivered, and is ringing with the shout of victory.

ANTONIO.—Pardon me, sir, this jubilee can only come, when I, redeemed from purgatory, enter the gates of paradise. Until then, there is danger and strife.

HENRY.—For that reason the church leads you that far by her sacraments, and affords you by means of their infallible efficacy an invincible protection. That is the great advantage of our orthodox church over the Protestant, that she makes the attainment of salvation dependent on the performance of the sacramental services themselves, and not as the Protestant church, on faith or the firm conviction of the necessity of the grace of God for the sinner. The Protestant christian cannot know whether his faith is firm enough, he must always be afraid that his faith may waver, he must then always be full of dread and anxiety about his salvation.

ANTONIO.—I do not think so, my dear sir. I have an unshaken confidence in the truth of the reply which Jesus gave to the question—what must I do that I may have eternal life,—and to all eternity I will believe in the grace of the father, who received the prodigal son, as he returned repenting. The matter is very simple in my view. If I believe in God, I must also believe that he is merciful; if he is merciful, he will forgive the penitent without the mediation of the priest. So soon as I deny that, I also deny God, and then of course I no longer need the sacraments.

HENRY.—But I should still think that the saving power of the church was more to be relied on than the saving power of your confidence in the grace of God.

ANTONIO.—I think not. If I have not yet a strong confidence and faith in the grace of God, then I can have no

confidence that the sacraments will be effectual in procuring for me the grace of God. If God in general would not forgive the sinner, the sacraments would possess no efficacy, so then we would have to believe that they operate like magic, and force the Almighty to dispense his grace. I must also then in the Catholic church have confidence or faith in God's grace, or no sacrament will quiet my conscience.

HENRY.—It may quiet your conscience or not, you may have faith or not, it will still be of great advantage to you. That is the most comfortable part of it, that it helps him, who has no confidence in it, just as a medicine heals a sick man, who hopes nothing from it.

ANTONIO.—That would surely be very agreeable if it were only certain, and we could be assured of it by any means, and if the efficacy of the sacrament were not made to depend on the faith of another, of which I cannot be certain, that is, on the faith of the priest who administers the sacrament. You know, that the church teaches, that every sacrament is only then effectual to the faithful, when the priest who administers it, has the *intention* of administering a sacrament. I cannot clearly express myself in your language.

HENRY.—I understand; you mean he must have the *will*, the *disposition of mind* to administer a sacrament.

ANTONIO.—The necessity of this *intention* the holy council maintains very strongly, when it says (Canon II. Sess. 7) "If any one maintains that *intention* is not necessary to the priest to do what the church does when he administers the sacraments, *let him be accursed.*" That is a very doubtful affair to me. I can be certain of my *own* faith, for I can surely know what is in my mind, but how can I be certain of the *intention* of the priest? If his mind had been disturbed, or occupied by any thing else when he baptized, confirmed, absolved, and even gave me extreme unction, then I am as good as not baptized, confirmed, absolved or anointed. Who will assure me that the priest has the right intention? You well know

how men are, and how through mere habit, they at length thoughtlessly perform what they are called upon to do daily. But it is still worse, when the priest himself does not believe in the efficacy of the sacrament. Since then I have no means in the world of being assured that the priest had the right intention, I must be forever uncertain whether the sacraments were of any benefit to me, and it can very easily happen, that after all I may be deceived, although I may have received the sacraments devoutly. It is very hard indeed, dear sir, that we cannot receive our salvation immediately from God, but that the priest must conclude the contract with God for us, and that the whole contract may be void, if the priest commits some error in the formalities.

HENRY.—Antonio! Antonio! your prattle disturbs my mind! I became a Catholic chiefly because I believed that I could be more certain of my salvation in the Catholic church than in the Protestant, in which I was taught to depend on my own faith. But I now see that it is more dangerous to be obliged to rely on the faith of another, of which we cannot at all be certain. Go now—leave me! I wish to be alone!

ANTONIO.—(*Sorrowfully,*)—I communicated to you my joy upon the answer which I found after a long enquiry, and hoped to gladden your heart. Dear sir, why then cannot you rejoice with me? the word of the Saviour is also applicable to you, “keep the commandments and thou shalt enter into life.” Cling to this word and dismiss every thing else from your mind. I thought that you could place as much, yea, even more confidence in the word of the Saviour himself, than in the declarations of his vicegerent in Rome.

HENRY.—You are right, my friend, I will do it. Now leave me!

Antonio obeyed. Henry felt his faith considerably shaken by this conversation with his servant. We know in what disposition of mind he was led to the Romish church. He had hoped, there to be quite certain of his salvation, as it

no longer depended on his own faith. He felt, that in this respect his condition was not meliorated, but rendered worse, and with that there was connected the painful experience that he had deceived himself in the whole object of his conversion. He well knew that Antonio had no other teacher than the New Testament, and could not avoid the thought, that Antonio's sound understanding was leading him in a way, which he regretted he had not himself sooner entered. He became indignant at the thought, that the religious teacher of his youth had not explained to him the scriptures in their relation to the Catholic church; for he felt that the step which now occasioned the disagreement with his family, and gradually also with his own heart, would never have been taken, if the gospel had been explained to him, as it explained itself to Antonio. Antonio, as he read it as a Catholic, interpreted every word in reference to his own church, and hence very quickly observed that, which a Protestant unacquainted with Catholicism easily overlooks, and which for that reason does not afterwards immediately occur to him, when an attempt is made to alienate him from his church. Henry regretted, that whilst pursuing his philosophical studies with so much zeal at the university, he had totally neglected the New Testament, and he silently resolved to begin the work anew, hoping, that the simple word of the gospel would afford a guide which would extricate him from the labyrinth of theological and philosophical subtleties. At the same time he again took up the paper which he had written in Frankfurt, on which all the grounds of his conversion were fully developed. He found that much which he had written down as undoubted certainty had vanished into nothing; but he also yet found much, which seemed to him irrefutable, and which gave him fresh courage. Particularly, that appeared to him to be removed beyond all doubt, which was to be the subject of the next evening's conversation, namely, that the Roman Catholic is the only true apostolic church.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE ONLY TRUE CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH AND HER POPES.

The next evening the family assembled for their usual sociable conversation, at which, according to the agreement, Bernhard was also present, yet only on the condition, that he was to take part when particularly requested, with which he was perfectly satisfied. He had been convinced from his short acquaintance with Henry, that he had become a Romanist merely from having misapprehended the nature of his religious wants, and that from this a sincere conviction followed. Hence he believed, that Henry deserved forbearance, and should not be violently assaulted, if he were again to be won back to the church, from which he had separated. He flattered himself with the hope that Henry might again be won, since he had become a Romanist not from impure motives, but from conviction. In his opinion that time was misspent which was devoted to disputing with those who had become proselytes from mere selfishness, politics, or indifference to all religion. The assembled friends now challenged Henry to communicate his reasons, *why he held the Roman Catholic to be the only apostolic church?*

"You will grant, Henry began, that Jesus, or at least his apostles, founded a church, that is, an external society of christians, bound together by the same faith, the same government and the same rites. Of this church Jesus says, Matt. xvi. 18, that the gates or power of hell shall not prevail against it. The church founded by the apostles cannot then have been destroyed, it must yet exist, and it also can be the only true church of Christ. The question now, is, where is it to be found? Not in the evangelical churches, for they have only existed for 300 years; we know their

founders, namely, Luther in Saxony, and Zwingle in Switzerland. But we do not know an uninspired founder of the Catholic church. Her origin, and the succession of bishops in her, extends to the apostles themselves, she is then the church founded by the apostles personally, therefore quite certainly the true church, to which alone all the promises and privileges which Jesus gave to his church, refer. She and she only is in possession of true christianity, of the lawful priesthood, the proper church government, and the true means of salvation. All those, such as Lutherans and Reformed,\* which separate from her, depart from the true church of Christ, and must hence be regarded as heretics. These positions appear to me so true and withal so connected, that I know nothing that can be said against them, and now my friends, I will wait and hear your objections.

FATHER.—You have brought forward two very different propositions, as though they were one and the same, and include both in your idea of *the church*. When you say, that Jesus founded a church which can never have been destroyed, you speak of the great christian communion, or of *christianity*, which comprehends in it the Romish, Evangelical, Greek and other churches and sects as its *parts*. Christianity, or the church of all churches, was surely founded by Jesus and the apostles, because it can have no other origin. That is the church which cannot be destroyed. In the course of time "the churches," that is the Romish, Evangelical, &c. church sprung from it. When then you speak of the *truth* of the church and refer this expression to the *origin* of *christianity*, then christianity only was instituted by Christ; but not the Catholic, Evangelical and Greek divisions into which christianity was subsequently split. In this sense an *untrue* church would be equivalent to an *unchristian* church, as for example, Mohamedanism, Judaism, the church of Fohi in China, or of Dalai Lama in Tartary. In respect to origin from Jesus and the apostles, *christianity* is the true church.

\*The Calvinistic Churches on the continent of Europe were called reformed.—(Trans.)

HENRY.—I do not mean it in that sense, but I hold the Roman Catholic to be the true church, because she was founded by Jesus and the apostles personally. By the word *church* I did not mean christianity or the great communion of christians, but the Roman Catholic church which is subject to the Pope.

FATHER.—Then you were wrong in starting out with the idea of christianity in general, and yet in the progress of your reasoning confining your use of the word *church* to the Romish communion. You know that all reasoning is false, in the course of which a different sense is attached to the principle idea.

HENRY.—That is unquestionable, agreeably to the rules of logic. I will then state my position thus: That can be the only true church among all existing churches, which as the oldest was founded by Jesus and the apostles *personally*, and from which all others first separated themselves.

FATHER.—You have now stated your position correctly, but yet it is to no purpose. You lay much stress upon it, that the Romish church was founded by the apostles personally. If this is to be the mark of the true church, then only the churches of those cities and countries in which the apostles themselves lived and taught could constitute the true church, and the Romish church in Germany, Ireland, Poland, and all America would not belong to the true church, because these churches were not founded by the apostles personally, but by other christian teachers.

HENRY.—But yet they are apostolical, for they have received the apostolical instruction from other persons of the true church.

FATHER.—Then you acknowledge that it is the same thing whether the apostles founded a congregation by their *personal oral* instruction, or by their *personal written* instruction, and that the other persons who impart to it the instruction of the apostles, do not take away from it the character of apostolical. It is not they, properly, but the gospel, which establishes the new church. Thus it was in the

institution of the evangelical church. She was also a branch which proceeded from the Romish church and received from her the holy scriptures, the three general confessions and some other things, and only rejected that which was opposed to the written instructions of the apostles. It was not the reformers who founded our church, but the gospel, after it had been brought out of its concealment by them. They were only the means—the missionaries of the gospel, and hence with great propriety we call ourselves an evangelical or gospel church. That church founded by the *written* instruction of the evangelists and apostles is more safely a true church, than one founded by *oral* instruction, because written doctrine is more certain and secure than oral doctrine which has passed through the heads of so many other teachers. The former proceeded immediately from the spirit of the apostles and was reduced to writing which cannot be changed, but the latter has been subjected to constant change through many centuries, and it is not to be doubted but that every one who imparted it, shaped it according to his own peculiar views.

HENRY.—The difference, dear father, consists in this, that those churches founded by the Catholic church also assumed her organization and whole character, and thus became one with her, but other churches, the evangelical for instance, changed many things. In judging of the genuineness of a church every thing depends on its character.

FATHER.—Then you see, my son, that when we speak of the *true* church, we must not inquire about its apostolical *origin*, but whether it possesses the true *character*; so that the question, which among all existing churches is the true church, can have no other meaning than this; *which is the best*, that is, *which most perfectly answers the design which a christian church should generally have in view*. *What was the object of christianity in your opinion?*

HENRY.—We have already agreed, that the object was to deliver men from the punishment of sin. The church is the means of accomplishing it.

FATHER.—Good, so then that church is the only true one which serves that purpose, that is, is capable not only of *quieting the apprehensions* of men about the punishment of sin, but also of delivering them from the *dominion or service of sin*. We have not then to ask which is the *oldest* church, but which is the *best*, that is, best adapted to fulfil the object of christianity. Consequently our Augsburg confession is very right in saying, “The true church exists where the gospel is properly taught, and the sacraments are administered according to the directions of Christ.” If it should now be found that the evangelical church better answers the designs of christianity, then she would also be the truest or the best church, but the Roman Catholic would be either less true or altogether a false church, if she answered this purpose in a less degree, or really opposed it.

HENRY.—It is not possible, dear father, that the Roman Catholic church, as the oldest, could ever be a corrupt church; for she has the spirit of God, is infallible, and hence among all other churches is the only one protected against errors of faith and practice.

FATHER.—Experience contradicts that. Jesus himself says, that false teachers will arise in his church; the apostles had experience of that, and no century has elapsed in which the church has not been disturbed by controversies about doctrine and practice. The councils decided many points, but they were not always unanimous; many things remained undecided. The early church herself adopted some measures which were afterwards abandoned, for instance, the love feast, and the administration of the Lord’s supper to children. You see then, that it is possible for the church founded by the apostles to be in some degree corrupted in the course of time. But if such corruptions exist, if, for instance, the church introduces so many means of reconciliation, that it is no longer necessary for men to abandon sin, but sufficient to declare it their intention to do so; if in public worship she regards instruction and edification as matters of minor importance and the ceremonies as the

principal thing; if she introduces superstitious rites and considers them as essential, as for instance the adoration of saints and relics; if the organization is so shaped that the church is no longer serviceable to christianity, but only to the priesthood; if every thing is so perverted, that instead of Christ, a pope is set up, in the place of apostles, bishops, and in the room of the church, a priesthood; then the church is different from what she originally was, and no longer answers the design of religion, but the purposes of the priesthood. Under these circumstances it is the *right*, yea, the *duty* of Christian congregations to reform the church and to abolish the abuses that have crept in. I would designate this as the *right of reformation*. This right was exercised about 300 years ago by many congregations of the west, and thus was established the Evangelical church. After emperors and kings had often, but always in vain, insisted upon a reformation in the "head and members" as they expressed it, that is, in the pope and priesthood, but the popes had baffled these attempts, as well as the exertions of the two great Councils of Constance and Basel in the fifteenth century, that finally occurred to which the church had a natural right; she reformed herself and followed Luther, Zwingli and other pious men, who showed from the writings of the evangelists and apostles, how the church should be constituted. It was not these men who brought about the reformation, but the general will of the people, who adhered to the gospel or the doctrine of Christ, which these men explained to them anew. As the popes, instead of encouraging the reformation, proscribed and excommunicated the reformers and all their followers, they were perfectly right since unjustly excommunicated, in joining together in a christian communion or church, which they called evangelical, because it was founded on the gospel. From the right of reforming the church, necessarily follows the legitimacy of the origin or constitution of the evangelical church. Another person as reformer would not have been necessary, if the popes had been more solicitous about

the honor of Christ, than about their earthly dominion. It is then beyond controversy, that the evangelical church is a christian and apostolical church, and that, she, as one reformed according to the gospel, is also a true church, and at least possesses more of the character of the true church, than the Romish, which retains and perpetuates all the deficiencies and abuses which rendered the reformation necessary.

HENRY.—Even if I grant all this, yet there still remains the objection, that she is not a *catholic* church, and has declared herself off from the *first church* founded by the apostles, which is united under the bishop of Rome as the head.

FATHER.—I must ask Bernhard for an explanation of the meaning of the word *catholic*.

HENRY.—I can give it to you myself. *Catholic* is a Greek word and signifies *general*. The expression was commonly used in the second and third centuries by the church, and was occasioned by certain teachers of false doctrine, to whom it was objected, that all the other christian congregations believe differently from them, and that hence their doctrine as opposed to the *general* belief, could not possibly be true.

BERNHARD.—That is correct; but it is to be observed in addition, that by the expression *catholic church* was meant the congregations in the Roman Empire, *the imperial church*, and not all christian congregations in the world. The word *οἰκουμενή*, which expresses the same as *catholic*, frequently signifies the Roman Empire, hence also an *oecumenical* council did not comprehend all christian teachers, for instance, from Aethiopia, Persia, India, Arabia, &c. but only the *bishops of the empire*. Only under these circumstances was it possible that the Roman Emperors, as Constantine and Theodosius the Great, could call together *general*, or *oecumenical*, viz. *imperial councils*, and give the sanction of law to their decrees. The title also of *oecumenical bishop* (which I will mention here) which the bishops of

Rome arrogated to themselves, and which was finally granted to them, meant nothing more than *first or chief bishop of the Roman Empire*, and by no means, as was subsequently maintained, general or sole bishop of the whole christian world. *Catholic* church originally then, meant nothing more than the *imperial church*, the church of the Roman Empire. When the Roman Empire was divided into two great parts, the western and eastern, or the Latin and the Greek, then there naturally arose *two Catholic* churches, that is, two imperial churches, the western and the eastern. The latter or the Greek church after her separation from the western, continued to call herself a catholic, that is, an imperial church, and the Latin church never disputed the title. It was only after the dismemberment of the Latin Empire, that men in the ignorance of the middle ages began in the west to use the expression, catholic church, in the sense of *general*, consequently *only true church*, although after the destruction of the Roman Empire, there could not properly any longer be a catholic or imperial church. *Roman Catholic* church then properly designates the christian church of the Latin-Roman Empire, and thus has a correct meaning. But if *catholic*, as men now wish to use it, is to designate the general church in all places of the world, then *Roman Catholic* is as great a contradiction of terms as "*wooden iron*" inasmuch as, besides the eastern church, the evangelical church has arisen, and *Roman* now since the dissolution of the Roman Empire, only yet extends to that *particular church*, which acknowledges the *bishop of Rome* as its head. At the present day *Roman Catholic* signifies the *Romish Particular General Church*, which is a sad contradiction.

**HENRY.**—I never viewed it in that light and readily confess that no importance can be attached to the title *catholic*, yea, that on account of the totally changed political relations of the empire, it no longer has any meaning. But even if I do regard the Romish church as a particular church, yet you must grant that she is the oldest, and that she was founded immediately by the apostles. And this is

certainly an advantage. The evangelical churches are all new, instituted only three hundred years ago, and surely the promise of Christ, that his spirit should guide the church, does not refer to them.

FATHER.—I well know that you Romanists are always quoting this sentiment, “where the church of God exists, there is also the spirit of God, and he who declares himself off from the church also departs from communion with the spirit of God.” But you are wrong. The spirit of God is not exclusively bound to the Roman pope or church; of that the scriptures say nothing. The converse is rather true, *where the spirit of God is, and operates, there exists the church of God.* I do not feel myself bound to the head, Christ, by the members, but to the members by the head. And what you say about the advantage of antiquity and the modern organization of the evangelical church, that is already refuted by what was said before. There are old errors and new truths; so that in the investigation of every subject, the question should not be, is it old? but, is it true? Christianity was also once new, and so was every truth, which is now old to us.\*

HENRY.—But is it no advantage at all to the Romish church that she is the oldest?

FATHER.—She is by no means the oldest. Only read your New Testament, and you will have a more correct idea of the establishment of the *christian church*, for the *Roman papal church* is altogether out of the question. That the church was established in the Roman Empire, was not the choice of the apostles, but it necessarily occurred, because they lived in that empire. They founded individual congregations wherever they could, especially in Asia Minor and Greece, of course in districts, which do not belong to the present Romish church, but to the eastern church. If then any church in the world could claim immediate descent from the apostles, it would be the Eastern or Greek

church, for in her provinces, in Egypt, Syria, Pisidia, Paphlagonia, Galatia,—in Greece, Thrace, Macedonia, the first congregations were founded, and by the apostles themselves. If then the truth and genuineness of a church depended on her antiquity, the Eastern or Greek church would be the true one, and the Roman a spurious one. For perhaps not a single one of the Latin churches can show that it was founded by an apostle. It is true that during the life of the apostles, a congregation was founded at Rome, as we learn from the epistle which Paul wrote to them, but it was established before an apostle went there. The congregations scattered throughout the whole Roman Empire were the first churches, they may have been founded by the apostles themselves or by others. But they had not yet an external bond of union. They governed themselves and managed their own affairs, but they had yet no church government common to them all. This and the external form of a united society, they first received in the fourth century, when they were publicly acknowledged in the empire as a church, at the time that Constantine the Great became a christian, and called together the bishops to an imperial synod or diet, and shaped the church government according to the political divisions of the empire. But that, my son, was not the Romish church, that is, the one subject to *the pope*, but the *imperial church*, which embraced all the congregations in the empire, and at whose head the *emperors* stood, and not the *bishops*. The bishop of Rome then first became a patriarch, and enjoyed equal rights with the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem, and only afterwards received the precedence over them. But he was subject to the emperor as well as the other bishops.\*

HENRY.—Then the Roman bishops at that time were not popes, and did not rule the church.

FATHER.—I will leave you to answer that question, Bernhard.

\*See Appendix, No. III.

BERNHARD.—What you have said agrees perfectly with history. The bishops of Rome were at an early day very highly distinguished and influential, because they were the bishops of the great capital of that immense empire. The splendor of the city also cast its broad beams over them. But they were not lords of the church, and only stood on an equality with other great bishops.\* Every bishop was called *papa, pope*, i. e. father, particularly the patriarchs of Alexandria, and every church founded by an apostle called itself *sedes apostolica*, apostolical seat. The *precedence* was allowed to the Roman bishop only because he was the bishop of the capital of the kingdom, but no superior power or authority was bestowed upon him. It was the christian emperors, Constantine and his successors, who established ecclesiastical law, who appointed bishops and deposed them, who called general church councils and confirmed their decisions, by which alone they received the authority of law. And when Charlemagne at the beginning of the ninth century again restored the Western Imperial dignity, he also exercised supreme authority over the bishops of Rome, and summoned church councils. It was only in the eleventh century that popery was established by the Roman bishop Gregory the VII. and with it the Romish church, and he was the man who first arrogated to himself exclusively the title *papa, (pope)* notwithstanding that the Eastern bishops never recognized this assumption.† The *Romish* church then in the present sense of the word, where it designates those congregations which acknowledge the Roman bishops as pope, or as supreme head of the church, was first established in the middle of the eleventh century under the Roman bishop Gregory the VII. after the eastern christians publicly and solemnly separated from the Western in 1053, because they would not recognize the supreme authority which the Roman bishops began to assume. Hence the *Roman-*

\*See Appendix, No. IV.

†To this day the ministers in the Greek Church are called *papa, (pope) father.*

*papal* church was first established only one thousand years after Christ. When then in the sixteenth century the evangelical christians separated from the Roman church, they did not leave an old but a new church, which had been instituted but about five centuries before, and returned again to the old church.

**HENRY.**—But did not Jesus appoint the apostle Peter the supreme head of his church, and did not Peter, when he was bishop at Rome, bequeath this supremacy to the Roman bishops as his successors? Has not this official pre-eminence of the Roman bishops always been acknowledged in the church? Had not then the Roman bishops the right from the very beginning, of being popes?

**FATHER.**—This error has been so often and so conclusively refuted, that it is almost idle to say any thing more about it. You found your pretension on the words of Christ, Matt. xvi. 18. “And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (v. 19.) And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt lose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.” The words of the 19th verse, which speak of the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, we will not now consider. For we have already (ch. vi.) discussed that subject, and again, they do not bestow any prerogative upon Peter, for the Saviour, Matt. xviii. 18. John xx. 23, addresses the same words to all the apostles. The 18th verse then remains to be considered. Jesus here, according to the custom of antiquity, gave Peter, who was properly called Simon, another name, just as Paul was first called Saul, and the apostle Matthew’s first name was Levi. The internal character of Peter, namely, his courage and stability, (for which reason our Lord compared him to a *rock*,) gave occasion to Jesus to change his name, which was very common at that day. Thus David calls God his *rock*, upon which he trusts. Hence the Saviour means;

upon this your courage and stability, unshaken as a *rock*, (which will not yield to the Pharisees and Scribes, and will not be moved by any persecution) I build the hope of establishing a perpetual church; or you by your courage and activity will be distinguished above all in the establishing of my church." But our Saviour says not a single word about Peter being the lord of the church, or even the chief of the apostles. What Jesus said, was only an evidence of what he hoped, from the character and courage of the apostle, and nothing more.\* It was neither a commission nor a charge; and we would act just as unreasonably, as if we would conclude from that other address of Jesus to Peter, (Matt. xvi. 23.) that he had for ever excluded Peter from his church. "But he turned and said unto Peter, get thee behind me Satan; (deceiver,) thou art an offence unto me: for thou savorest not of the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

HENRY.—I grant that in those words Jesus gave no commission, and bestowed no supreme power on Peter; but they only show, what Jesus hoped from Peter; but yet it still cannot be denied, that Jesus at another place gave Peter paramount authority over the church or the chief episcopal office. For we read that after his resurrection he said three times to Peter, "Feed my lambs." John xxi. 15—17.

FATHER.—But he does not say you *alone* shall feed my lambs; he does not thereby exclude the other apostles. This whole commission rather shows, that Peter should thereby be stimulated to devote himself anew to the performance of his apostolical duties. He had denied Jesus, and the intention of the threefold question of the Redeemer, "Simon, lovest thou me?" must have been well understood by him. After the death of Jesus he betook himself again to the sea of Tiberias, and devoted himself to his former occupation, that of a fisherman; and so he well

\*See Appendix No. V.

needed the renewed encouragement, "feed my sheep," that is, abandon your business and devote yourself to the work of an apostle. For the words of Jesus by no means embrace the idea, you shall be chief of the apostles, and the only bishop of all future christians.

**HENRY.**—But according to the records of the acts of the apostles, did not the other apostles always yield the pre-eminence to him, and did he not always stand at their head?

**FATHER.**—A distinguished apostle he most certainly was, because he had talents and energy, but that he exercised authority over his fellow apostles or the whole church, is not true. You find no evidence of it, but plain proof of the contrary;\* Paul (Galat. ii. 9.) says that James, Peter and John "seemed to be pillars, of the church," and thus attributes *equal* influence and authority to them all. Paul was chosen by Jesus to be the apostle of the Gentiles, and according to Galat. ii. 9. the other apostles acknowledged him as such, and declared that they would confine themselves exclusively to the gentiles.† Now if we reasoned as the Romanists do, we could maintain, that Peter was only the supreme head of the Jewish Christians, but Paul the supreme head of the Gentile christians.

**HENRY.**—But if Peter had no supremacy over the other apostles and the church, then he could not have transferred it to the bishops of Rome?

**FATHER.**—And that was never done. If Jesus had really (Matt. xvi. 18.) bestowed any prerogative on him, yet he would have received it merely on account of his personal qualities of firmness and solidity, for which reason he was compared to a rock. But since personal qualities cannot be bequeathed to others, so this prerogative of Peter could not be transferred to others. Of course then it must have become extinct at his death, or it would certainly sooner have been bestowed upon the apostle John who survived Peter, if upon any one, than upon the then bishop of Rome.†

\*See Appendix VI.

†Appendix VII.

MOTHER.—I cannot but believe, that the Saviour would have spoken much more explicitly, if he had wished to make Peter the supreme ruler of the church. Rights so important and exerting such an unspeakable influence on Christianity are not bestowed on any one in a short figurative expression, “thou art a rock, and upon it will I build my church.” I should think that the Lord could without any difficulty have said, ‘you shall be the head of my church, and at your death you shall bequeath this right to the bishops of Rome.’ Why would not the Lord have said that, if he had even remotely thought of it? But in the discourses of Jesus and in the writings of the apostles, we read of only *one* head of the church, and that is Christ himself. Your position, dear Henry, that you Romanists alone can be true Christians, because you adhere to the pope, and claim descent from the first church, reminds me of the Jews, (John viii. 37, 45.) who maintained that they alone were the true children of God, because they descended from Abraham. The Lord tells them, that they only then shall be the children of Abraham, when they do the works of Abraham,—be as pious as Abraham. Thus he will acknowledge only those as true Christians, who “have the same spirit, the same mind” with him, whether they are papists or not. I would suppose, dear Henry, that the matter might be settled in this manner, we might dispense with all learned investigations, whether in the first church the bishops of Rome were recognized as supreme rulers of the christian world or not.

HENRY.—Yes, it may be so. Neither can I deny, that this acknowledgment cannot be proved. I have read the writings of the fathers, and confess that I found nothing, which establishes a recognition of the Romish pontiff. Although I have seen that the church in Rome was regarded as one of the oldest and most distinguished, yet I could not find, that any *jurisdiction* over the church was ascribed to her bishop.

BERNHARD.—Your observations are very correct and im-

partial, dear friend. There is a great difference between highly venerating a church and inquiring about her confessions of faith, because she is one of the oldest and most distinguished, and venerating her, because her bishop is supreme head of the church.

**HENRY.**—But even if the supremacy of the popes cannot be established by the New Testament, and was not recognized in the early centuries, as I now myself grant, yet it is so necessary to the church to have a pope that one would have to be appointed, if we had none already, so that it is highly improper to reject him. For, first, there must be one point of union in the church, to bind all things together and keep them in connection, if the whole is not to fall to pieces. There must also be a unity of church government, a central point of faith, in fine, all that we have in the pope.

**FATHER.**—You here combine several things together, which we must separate. What do you mean by a point of union in the church respecting its faith?

**HENRY.**—One, that can pronounce a decisive judgment upon all doctrinal controversies, and thus maintain peace in the church, or restore it, when it is disturbed.

**FATHER.**—Have your popes been able to do that?

**HENRY.**—Not altogether, it is true; but in most instances they have maintained the unity of the faith.

**FATHER.**—They could not prevent, they rather occasioned the separation of the whole eastern from the western church; they could not prevent it, that since they founded their kingdom in the 11th century, there have been Waldenses, Wicklifites, and Hussites; and that Dominicans, Franciscans and Jesuits, conducted the most violent controversies among themselves about the immaculate conception of Mary, original, and sanctifying grace, which remain undecided to this day. They could neither prevent the commencement, nor afterwards arrest the progress of Quietism and the Jansenit controversies in the French church,—it was thus with the great fundamental principle established by the councils of Constance and Basel, that the pope is

subject to a general council; it was thus also with the great and powerful reformation in which nearly half of the West declared itself free from Rome. Of what avail then was your point of union in faith to you?

HENRY.—A great deal, for it was the popes alone, who amid the storm of parties, bound the greater part of the church in unity, and by their influence held it together. If it had not been for the popes, the whole church would have been divided into sects.

FATHER.—Rather say, if it had not been for the popes, the reformation would have been general, and the *whole* western church would have been converted into an evangelical communion. You say, you have a point of union, *the pope*, to whose decrees all must subject themselves; but we also have a point of union, *the gospel*, whose instructions every evangelical christian follows.

HENRY.—But we are better off than the evangelical christians, for amongst them every one explains the gospel as he pleases, but the decrees of the popes are not subject to the interpretation of every one. Hence among you there is diversity of opinion, amongst us, there is unity.

FATHER.—The difference is rather this, that we follow the divine revealed word, but the Romanists obey a fallible man, and are forced to confess as true and good whatever pleases the Roman bishops. And it has pleased them, to establish as an article of faith above all others, that they are the unlimited lords of the church and the whole christian world, and that it is a most heinous sin not to believe and obey them. The difference is, further, that the gospel contains a sum of truths unalterably fixed, but the faith of the Romanist can always receive a new, and often an unwelcome addition from the pope. The difference is, again, that amongst us, the variety of religious opinions can be made uniform only through the influence of the truth, but in the Romish church uniformity of sentiment is produced by violence and excommunication. For what means did the popes employ to maintain the unity of the faith?—Think of

the fearful and terrible wars of extermination which they waged against the Albigenses and Waldenses—of the crusades, by which many towns were utterly destroyed, of that monster, the Inquisition, which according to the authentic report of the unfortunate Llorente, burned alive in Spain alone, from the year 1481 to 1808, 32,382 persons, and imprisoned and robbed of their property 291,450. Of the abominations which were allowed in England under the bigotted Mary, at the introduction of popery,—of the horrible massacre on St. Bartholomew's day at Paris, for joy at which the pope instituted spiritual festivals—of the thirty years war in Germany which was instigated by the Jesuits—of the dreadful violence by which the reformation was suppressed in Austria and Bohemia, and of all those streams of blood which pollute your church, and condemns her before God as guilty of the most dreadful murders, and then yet boast to me, that the pope maintains union and peace in the church. A pretty point of union indeed, whose only means of operation are, fire and sword.\*

HENRY.—You set too much to the account of the popes, that was owing only to the inconsiderate zeal of the princes.

FATHER.—Now, you know very well, that the popes inflamed the wars against the Waldenses and the evangelical, that in the seven years war a consecrated hat and sword, were presented by the pope to the Austrian field marshall Daun, that with it he might annihilate the heretical king of Prussia,—that the popes established the inquisition,—that pope Innocent IV. augmented its severity, and that they commanded and promoted its general introduction. And only hear, what ‘the father of the christian world’ wrote to the king of France in 1712, when he sent the bull *unigenitus*. “The kingdom of heaven, that is, *the Catholic church*, receives this advantage from the civil power, that those who act contrary to the confession of faith and order of the church, are *destroyed* by the *rigor* of the civil princes, and

\*Appendix, VIII.

the punishments which *the church herself, the pope may not wish to inflict* are laid upon the necks of the obstinate by the civil authority.”

HENRY.—You believe then that the unity of the faith could be maintained without a pope?

FATHER.—I believe it; and that it is very possible I see in the example of the Greek church, which has no pope.

HENRY.—But who is to decide in religious controversies?

FATHER.—Let it be as was done in the christian world for nearly a thousand years before there was a pope; let the ruler of the country convene a synod of his kingdom to settle the dispute. In this manner were the greatest controversies of the ancient church settled for the space of 900 years. But it is still better, to leave these different opinions correct themselves, for the truth will most infallibly appear in the end, it will always triumph. This agrees with what the Saviour said. He compares the church to a field, (Matt. xiii. 24, 30.) in which a man sowed the good seed of truth, but among which the enemy scattered the tares of error. The servants wished to pluck up the tares, just as the pope desires to exterminate heretics and heresy, but the householder said, “let both grow together until the harvest.” We are then taught to endure the erring until the last day, if they cannot be brought to the truth by instruction.

HENRY.—But there must at least be unity in the *church government*, and this cannot be well maintained otherwise, than by a common supreme head.

FATHER.—Before there were popes the Roman Emperors governed the church. \* \* \* \* \*

A system of church government that is to extend over all christians in all quarters of the world is not possible, and exceedingly expensive and oppressive.

MOTHER.—I confine myself to the apostle Paul, who proposes another point of unity, not the pope, but Christ. He writes thus to the Ephesians, (ch. ii. 20, &c.) “Ye are

built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the *chief corner stone*, (point of unity.) In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” In the fourth chapter, in which he maintains the unity of the church, the apostle does not even mention the pope or the vice-gerent of Christ, but in the eleventh verse he recites the ecclesiastical offices thus, “And he gave some *apostles*; and some, *prophets*; and some, *evangelists*; and some, *pastors* and *teachers*;” but he does not say that Christ ordained one to be the supreme head of all.

HENRY.—That is true, dear mother; but it is still certainly of great advantage to the church, to have a spiritual chief, who is equal in rank and dignity to kings and emperors, or elevated above them, who by the independent possession of an extensive country belongs to the rulers of this world, and who blazes in all the brilliancy of a sovereign prince. It is of great advantage for those who are placed near him, the cardinals and archbishops, to hold the rank of princes, and that bishops subscribe themselves like princes, “by the *grace of God*.” This exalted hierarchy constitutes an indissoluble chain, which reaches from the lowest hut to the most elevated throne, connects every thing together, and secures to the church her glory, her independence on the authority of kings, and her great influence upon the minds of the people. The rank of this exalted body of ecclesiastics every where secures them a place among the great of the earth; they sit among kings and princes. The ears, the hearts of the powerful are open to them; they learn and make proper use of their infirmities. On the other hand, look at the poor, miserable, evangelical clergy,—how far separated from the great men of the world, not allowed to approach nearer than the common people,—how they are excluded from the most insignificant princely court—and how the most distinguished clergyman in the employ of a court is not more highly regarded than the gentleman of the bed chamber. Is it at all

to be wondered at, that since the reformation, so many princes, dukes and lords have become Catholics? Assuredly posterity will yet see all the princes of Europe and other nations join the Catholic church. The advantages which the church gains from the grandeur of the pope and clergy is certainly very great. What cares the pope, who is himself a great independent prince, about the opposition of another king? If this king desires to have any thing from the pope relating to ecclesiastical affairs, he must send an ambassador to him as to another king, and the supreme head of the church treats with him as an equal, as one political power with another. If any thing is asked which is prejudicial to the church, the matter is rejected without further discussion, and the submission in the end is on the part of the princes. In what exalted dignity did not the supreme head of the church appear, when after the Congress of Vienna several German princes sent an embassy to Rome to negotiate a concordat for their Catholic subjects! the embassy was obliged to wait eight weeks before they could lay their propositions even before cardinal Gonzalvi, at that time secretary of state. He immediately returned their papers, after having marked with his pencil the alterations which must be made before the matter could be submitted to the holy father. It finally progressed so far, that their business was proposed to the pope, who was in no hurry about his reply, and at last, when the embassy insisted upon an answer, told them, that he could do nothing in the matter, and with this decision the embassy left Rome. How is it, on the other hand, in Protestant countries, when the ruler desires to have any thing—He commands, and men must obey, however unwilling the clergy may do it. No, only grant that the Protestant church is subject to the arbitrary authority of every prince, but the Catholic church is free and independent in the world, because she has a pope. I still am right when I say that a pope would have to be appointed if we had none already.

FATHER.—There is truth and falsehood mingled in your

discourse. It is true, that the Evangelical church has no protection, when the ruler undertakes any thing prejudicial to her, and it is high time to adopt some measure, by which the relative dignity of church and state would be established. But to effect this we do not need a Catholic hierarchy and pope, but only ecclesiastical synods or councils, which are now introduced into many Evangelical countries. But the experience of 300 years in Germany, Sweden and Denmark, teaches us that the Evangelical church is exposed to no danger from the power of her Evangelical monarchs, and is only opposed in those districts, or provinces, where the rulers were, or became Romanists. It is also true, that the Evangelical ministry is too slightly regarded in the state, that on account of their want of rank they are excluded from intercourse with princes, statesmen and high nobility, and hence cannot frustrate the proselyting schemes of the Romish dignitaries, who are identified with the courts. Yet this is only the case in Germany, not in Denmark, Sweden and England; and even in Germany, Prussia has taken a step towards improving this matter by the restoration of the episcopal dignity.\* But if it is not good to regard the ministry as of equal respectability with the common people only, yet it does not follow, that it is good to make them princes and rulers. The one extreme is just as injurious as the other. The middle course is the best. But it is very plain that it does not become him who wishes to be the father of the whole christian world, to possess also a wordly kingdom. He who desires to be the only bishop of all christendom, certainly must have enough to do in performing the duties of his office, that he need not besides burden himself with the weight of a wordly government. Your pope is only thereby involved in the strife of politics, and often wavers between the interests of the church and the advantage of his political kingdom. He and his cardinals are always more of politicians than clergymen,

\*The king has lately conferred the *honorary title* of *bishop* upon some distinguished divines.—[Tr.

more of jurists than theologians, more learned in worldly affairs, than in the things of the kingdom of God. Only read the history of the popes, and you will find that they were involved in political transactions without end, and that in truth they did not always act an honorable part. Or does it become those who wish to represent the apostles to be ministers of state, and commanders of armies, as Richelieu, Mazarin in France, as cardinal Sourdis, who commanded the fleet, and as cardinal La Valette, who commanded an army of the king of France in the thirty years war?

MOTHER.—We do not need history. The testimony of Jesus himself, condemns every thing you have said about the glory of a pope. He says expressly, John xviii. 36. "my kingdom is not of this world." And also in that passage, Matt. vi. 24, he condemns the pope, who is at the same time a vice-gerent of God and a worldly king, "no man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and serve the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The devil showed (Luke iv. 5.) the Saviour all the kingdoms of the world, in order to excite his ambition for an earthly kingdom; but the Lord said, "get thee behind me Satan." What the master did not wish and would not do, does not become the servants. The disciples had certainly a desire for a political government. But what did Jesus say to them when he observed it! "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. *But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*" (Matt. xx. 25. Mark x. 35.)

It really appears, as though the Lord had foreseen, that one of the successors of the apostles would make himself a pope.

FATHER.—The result then of this evening's conversation is this—that Christ did not intend that there should be a pope in his church—that there was no pope and no Romish church until the 11th century—that the pope, as a

worldly prince, is not suited to the spiritual character of the kingdom of Christ, and that it is a groundless position, that the Roman Catholic church was founded immediately by Christ, and to draw the inference, that therefore she is the only true church, and that the evangelical is a false church, is totally illogical.

**BERNHARD.**—I will take the liberty of adding but one observation. What were adopted by the church in the first five centuries, as public articles of faith, are all contained in the three general christian confessions, the apostolical, the Nicene, and the Athanasian. These confessions, the evangelical church has adopted, and consequently she agrees with the church of the first five centuries. When then she rejects the doctrine of the pope, the mass, the seven sacraments, the adoration of saints and other innovations, she only rejects what was introduced into the church at a later period, without any scriptural ground whatever. For those three confessions contain not a particle of these doctrines. As false then, as is the position, that the Roman Catholic church *as she is at present* is the church of the first centuries, so false is also the accusation that the evangelical communion has seceded from the old church. She has rather *returned* to her and the Romish church has apostatized.

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## CHAPTER X.

### ANTONIO AND MATT. XXIII.—THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

The father was absent for eight days on a journey of business, and the discussions were in the mean time suspended. Henry found time to think over the subjects that had been debated. But he came to no other conclusion than that he felt, that his strongest arguments, by which he expected to

justify his apostacy, were utterly untenable. He had yet one thing, upon which he laid great weight; but he feared, that he would fare no better than before. He began to acknowledge secretly to himself, that he certainly had acted precipitately, and with this secret acknowledgment there was associated a regret that he had abandoned his philological studies, devoted himself to painting, and had gone to Rome to be misled. Before he travelled to Rome, he transferred his philological books to his father, and since his return had not even inquired about them. Now he opened the book case, that, as he said, he might pass away his time during the absence of his father. He looked over them and here and there turned the leaves of an author. On the third day, he ordered the books to be conveyed to his own room, and soon after he was seen reading Plato very diligently.

Antonio wondered at the new taste of his master, for he was not accustomed to see him reading Latin and Greek books. He could not repress his curiosity to ask, what the contents of these books were, and what was to be learned from them.

"From them—answered Henry abruptly—we learn, that we should not pretend to know, what we do not know."

"They must be very singular books, replied Antonio. I thought that was plain of itself."

"One should think so, said Henry; but the art is very difficult, and I feel that I myself am but a novice in it."

ANTONIO.—If it means, that we are in error about many things, which we thought we understood very well, then I also have a book, from which I can learn a great deal of the same character.

HENRY.—And that is?

ANTONIO.—(Draws a small book from his pocket, and gives it to Henry.) Here—this is my treasury of wisdom.

HENRY.—Ah, your New Testament, translated by parson Van Ess. Have you again found any thing remarkable.

ANTONIO.—Yes, something very remarkable, and I only wonder that I did not find it at the first perusal.

HENRY.—Let me hear it.

ANTONIO.—It is the 23d chapter of Matthew. Here, only read it.

HENRY.—(After he had looked over it) Nothing more?

ANTONIO.—Is not that enough and more than enough? It is a description of Rome, of the pope, of the clergy.

HENRY.—You are foolish, Antonio; whoever found any such thing in it.

ANTONIO.—I have found it, and Christ's description of the pharisees and scribes, in all respects suits the pope and the clergy. But what was blamed in the Jewish priests as wrong, that must also be wrong in Christian priests, for Jesus warns against it.

HENRY.—In that you are perfectly right. But what similarity is there between the Jewish and the Roman priests.

ANTONIO.—If you will patiently listen to me, I will give you an explanation of the whole chapter, which will be so plain in its reference to the Romish clergy, that you will have to agree with me. It is, as though Jesus spoke of Rome, only in other words. Let us take up one point after another, and permit me to explain each in reference to the circumstances of our own times.

Verse 2-4. The scribes and the pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe (according to the law of Moses) that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not."

This I would interpret thus; the pope, the cardinals, the bishops, in one word, the priests sit on Christ's seat; all therefore which they bid you observe *according to the law of Christ*, that do ye, that is, follow them when they teach you these words of Christ; "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: judge not, that ye be not judged; blessed are the meek, the peace makers; love your enemies, bless those that curse you, bless and curse not." But do not ye after their works, for they themselves do not, what Jesus says. Jesus says, judge not; do not curse your neighbor, not even your enemy, but bless and do him good. But in the con-

fessional they judge all sinners and all who differ from them in faith; they curse all heretics and heresy most solemnly; they have an inquisition, in which they imprison and torture those who doubt what they say. The christian high priests have in many of their bulls frequently cursed those who do not obey them. The celebrated bull of Green Thursday, which is annually read in Rome on that day, contains nothing but curses, of which there are seventeen. It begins with the horrible words, "*We excommunicate and curse in the name of the Almighty God*, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and in the name of the apostles Peter and Paul and our own, all Hussites, Wicklifites, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists, Hugenots, Anabaptists, and apostates from the christian faith, as well as all other heretics, whatever they may call themselves, and also those, who believe them, receive them, patronize and defend them, all those who read their books without our permission, or keep, print, and defend them, for whatever reason it may be, publicly or privately, whatever the pretext or design may be, also all schismatics and those who through obstinacy withdraw their allegiance *from us* and from the Roman pope then on the throne."

Now in opposition to all this I listen to the apostle Peter in whose name this bull utters such fearful curses. (I Ep. ii. 15.) "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and ch. iii. 8. "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful; be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise, blessing; *knowing that ye are thereunto called*, that ye should inherit a blessing." And what says the apostle Paul, in whose name the bull also utters its maledictions against the unfaithful? Rom. xiv. 1. "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, *but not to doubtful disputations*, that is, not to judge his doubtful thoughts and views." Verse 4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master, he standeth or falleth." Verse 10. "But why dost thou judge thy bro-

ther? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand at the judgment seat of Christ." Verse 13. *Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.*" That, dear sir, is language that we might expect from an apostle of the benevolent Saviour, who cursed none of his bitter enemies, but prayed for them on the cross, and who according to Luke ix. 51, 56, severely reproved the disciples, when they wished to bring fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village, because the people there would not receive the Saviour. On the other hand, I have read something in that book, (pointing to an Italian work in Henry's book case, on the Council of Trent) which made me shudder. The holy bishops assembled at Trent, closed that great Catholic Synod by a general acclamation, which was done at the suggestion of the presiding officer, Cardinal de Lothringen. Towards the close, the cardinal cried out, "curse all heretics," and all the reverend bishops, these followers of Christ and the apostles, responded as with one voice; "curse, curse, curse"—O then an angel should have thundered amongst them the words of Paul, "judge not another's doubtful thoughts—bless and curse not!" but hear more of our text; Verse 4. "For they bind heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."

The pastor of this parish lately explained this in reference to oppressive doctrines, which the later teachers of the law introduced in addition to the law of Moses, and with which they oppressed the people. It then occurred to me, that our ecclesiastics had also bound a burden on the laity, for instance, that all the laity must confess their sins and smallest infirmities to the priests; that, though men repent of their sins, yet they must do works of penance, pray Pater nosters, but especially bestow offerings to churches, monasteries and priests; that for forty days no flesh must be eaten, that mass must be read for the dead; that the indulgence

of the church must be purchased ; and that all that the priests say must be unhesitatingly believed.

HENRY.—Stop, Antonio, there you say what is not true. Such a blind faith our priests do not demand.

ANTONIO.—What ! will you not believe the holy Council of Trent ?

HENRY.—Did the Council establish that ?

ANTONIO.—Does it not curse in all the canons all those who teach differently from the bishops of that council ?

HENRY.—Yes, that is true.

ANTONIO.—(Taking down the book on the Council of Trent.) Permit me ! Please to read here what the Council says in the thirteenth session. “The holy synod in establishing the doctrine of the Lord’s supper, hereafter forbids all faithful christians, from believing, teaching and preaching any thing else, than is here determined.” Precisely this rule is found in the twenty-first session. But let us further hear what our Saviour says.

Verse 5. “But all their works they do to be seen of men ; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.”

The Jewish Rabbis or teachers of the law and the priests wore strips of parchment with portions of the law inscribed upon them, bound round their wrists and their foreheads or attached to the borders of their garments, that they might appear very zealous for the law before the people. Now our priests do not exactly this. It would look very singular indeed, if the priests of the inquisition, who know no mercy, would wear this passage on their foreheads, “blessed are the merciful,” or if the pope, the cardinals and other priests would wear on Green Thursday, when the bull of seventeen curses is read, this passage ; “*bless and curse not,*” but our priests are rich in splendid mass vestments, in palls, in robes, violet garments, red hats, and all possible gorgeous apparel that can be imagined, and the pope has a triple crown towering on his head, by which we are easily reminded of the pictures representing the tower of Babel. And

how much is there not in the church service, which seems to be intended merely to show off the priest before the people! Take the mass, for example. Does it not glorify the power of the priest, who through the act of consecration creates the body of the God-man, locks it in the pyx and carries it about, much more than the power of Christ, who subjects his body to the declaration of the priest, and more than the power of God, who obeys the declaration of the priest?—and the holy sacrament of confession; does it not much more establish the power of the priest, who can forgive and retain sins, open and shut the kingdom of heaven, than the mercy of God, who is gracious or not according to the command and judgment of the priest?

HENRY.—Antonio, cease, you are becoming a heretic!

ANTONIO.—Not exactly; I am only translating the words of our Saviour into the language of our times; he says further;—v. 6, 7. “They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.”—This suits our times; the holy father, as vicegerent of God and Christ, claims a higher rank than all emperors and kings; his legates desire to have the preference above the ambassadors of all other princes; in the councils they look for the chief seats! I remember perfectly well, with what triumph the good fathers in Naples who brought me up, used to tell me, that the mighty emperor Frederic Barbarossa in Venice held the stirrup while the pope mounted his horse, and that another emperor, Henry IV. stood three nights as a penitent in the open air, before Pope Gregory VII. at the castle of Canusium. At that time I rejoiced at this not a little. But hear now what the Saviour says to his disciples and apostles;—ver. 8–10. But be ye not called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and call no man your *father* upon the earth; for one is your father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even Christ.

I cannot but be convinced that Christ here spoke in pro-

phetic spirit of the Pope. For every word suits him, just as if it had been lately written. Tell me, what is the proper meaning of Rabbi?

HENRY.—Rabbi was an honorary title of the Jewish teachers, and literally means, *exalted, most excellent.*

ANTONIO.—You see it suits the cardinals, who bear the title of *eminence*, which precisely means *exalted, most excellent.* But when the Saviour says that they shall call no one *father* upon earth, for God alone is worthy of that distinguished name, he certainly forbids us to call the Pope, holy father. If none of the apostles were permitted to bear that title, what authorizes their successors to bear it? That epithet *holy* is also offensive to me. When the Saviour was addressed by one as “*good master,*” he reproved him, (Matt. xix. 16, 17.) and said “there is none good, but one, that is God.” “Good master” is about equivalent to our present expression “*holy father.*” With this phrase “*holy father*” Jesus prayed to God, (John xvii. 11.) and hence I maintain that it is wrong to apply it to a man. I will never again call the pope, holy father. Neither should he be called the supreme head of the christian world, for it is said, “One is your master, or supreme head, even Christ.” But hear further, ver. 13. “But wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.” This I translate in a two fold way. First, our priests shut up from the laity the writings of the evangelists and apostles, which show the way to the kingdom of Christ, yea, they are the very doors of it. They declare it as ruinous to the soul, if a layman wishes to read for himself, what his Saviour and the apostles said for all, and not only for the priests.\* They themselves do not read it, but rather the breviary, and the papal bulls, the canonists and the fathers of the church, and thus neither do they go in; for of the kingdom of heaven they have made an earthly kingdom with great treasures, many

\*See Appendix X.

subjects and royal splendor, in comparison to which the kingdom of heaven may appear to many a very poor thing. Secondly, they shut the kingdom of heaven, because they do not zealously exhort the people to a christian life, but so prominently hold forth the hearing of mass, fasting, a blind faith in the instructions of the priests, praying the pater noster and other such holy works, that christian virtue is overlooked. For what is the most shocking of our sins, when we confess to a priest?—that we are passionate, envious, unfaithful,—that we lied, cheated, were unchaste, took unrighteous gain? it is true, the priest does not justify all these, but we are absolved from them on easy penance. But tell him, that you ate meat on a fast day; that you read a heretical book; that you laughed at a priest; that you doubted the efficacy of the holy water or the picture of a virgin; then you may be certain of not getting through without a severe penance, and you may take care lest you fall into the hands of the holy office.

**Verse 14.** “Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, for ye devour widow’s houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.”

This verse reminds me of the incalculable treasures which our priesthood possess in most countries and which they have received from pious souls, to pray for them that they might be delivered from purgatory, to give them indulgence and secure heaven for them. A Spaniard belonging to the embassy to Rome once said, that the priesthood in Spain, had twice more income than the king. How it is in Italy, you know well enough. I have also heard of not a few instances of rich widows who disinherited their poor relations, and bequeathed all their property to an order, monastery, or church, which is the same as to the priesthood.

**Verse 15.** “Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two fold more the child of hell than yourselves.”

HENRY.—You will not disprove of it, Antonio, that men attempt to convert those who have not the true faith?

ANTONIO.—Not in the least. Neither does Jesus mean that. The missionary societies for the heathen have always been much admired by me. What Jesus condemns, is partly, that the Jewish teachers sought to make a heathen not only a Jew, but a *pharisee*, and the latter was more important to them than the former; partly, that they compassed sea and land not to make him a good man, but a pharisee. In this respect it suits our priesthood. Their zeal is not directed towards making *christians*, but *Catholics*. If an evangelical christian comes to Rome, immediately the net is cast around him on all sides, just as if he were yet a heathen. To make a Catholic of him is so great a triumph, that the most degraded and dissolute subjects are not slighted, who as Catholics, are not a whit better than they were before, but often worse and more daring in iniquity, because now, they hope by absolutions, indulgences and penances to be delivered from all guilt, which they did not believe before. “To compass sea and land” also signifies to employ all means, good or bad, to make a Catholic. You have also lived in Rome, and know that money, or a promise, or a marriage, or a pension, or protection, or an office, or any thing else is used as a means of making Catholics out of christians, that is, to induce them to hear mass, to fast, to pray the rosary, to adore the saints and Mary, and to regard all heretics as damned. For often the whole change of a man consists in nothing more than in the adoption of these external signs of Catholicism.

Verse 16. “Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!—Ver. 18. And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.”

Here the Jesuits occurred to me, who constitute such a considerable, and now so highly esteemed a portion of our

priesthood, and teach as did the pharisees, that a false oath ‘is nothing,’ if only something else is thought of at the time, or something else added in thought. For example, if a man swear, that he had not done something, (although he had done it) he must only think at the same time, “not from my youth up—not at another time.” The popes also occur to me, who often absolved subjects free from the oath of fidelity to their monarchs, or monarchs from the oath sworn to their subjects, and generally claim the right of annulling an oath sworn before God. Pope Clemens the VI. gave authority to the confessor of the king of France, to absolve this king, his wife, and all his successors in consideration of some works of penance, from all oaths, the observance of which would be unpleasant, only with the exception of the oaths and vows relating to religious affairs. This the good fathers in Naples related to me as a proof of the great power of the pope, and I admired it very much at that time. But now, I think when one has sworn by the Almighty, it is a most heinous sin, if a man undertakes to absolve him from it, and that such a man thereby insolently elevates himself above God. The good fathers also told me, for the purpose of inspiring me with reverence for the saints, that Lewis the XI. King of France, believed himself bound by no oath, but one sworn by the relics of the holy Lupus, and they maintained, that an oath was much more holy and binding if taken by the relics of a saint or martyr.

Verse 23. Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and annise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.”

This the note in my New Testament beautifully explains thus; “of trifles you make a great deal, of important matters nothing.” This text has already been illustrated by what has been said. In the view of our priesthood it is a greater sin, not to hear the mass, than not to hear the voice

of justice and philanthropy; to refuse obedience to the priests, than to deny fidelity to God and man; to eat flesh during a fast, than to be unchaste.

Verse 25. "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess."

This relates to the great importance which our priests attach to fasting and other mere external works of penance, which do not reform the internal man, but leave him full of all moral uncleanness. And the matter becomes still worse, for fasting is ranked amongst those exercises, by which men can atone for sin and remove its punishment, that is, punishment for uncleanness of heart.

HENRY.—But Jesus himself fasted, and so did the apostles. Shall not then the christian do it? Have you not read that the Saviour once fasted forty days, and do you not know, that on this the great quadragesimal fast was founded?

ANTONIO.—I know that very well. But there is still a great difference. First, Christ and the apostles did it *voluntarily*; hence every christian should be left free. Again; Christ did it on an extraordinary occasion, when by severe examination he prepared himself for the hardships which he was to endure from man. Further; Jesus and the apostles did not practice it as something meritorious, as atoning for sin, or removing punishment. Finally, they fasted so, that they became *hungry*. But in our fasting we are *satisfied*, yea, *crammed full*. For our fasting is abstinence from *flesh*, just as if that prevented devotion, for it oppress no stomach and is easy of digestion. On the other hand, we eat all kind of indigestible food made of flour, and other victuals prepared in all the refinements of cookery, which only oppress the stomach and stupefy the mind. Is not this rank folly? And who can persuade himself, that the flesh of fish, which the Catholic fast allows, is not flesh? I should like to know, how our church came to the singular fancy of declaring that the flesh of fish is not flesh?

**HENRY.**—It was believed justifiable to except fish in the prohibition of eating flesh, because Jesus in the wilderness, according to Matt. xiv. 19. where he probably fasted, had bread and fish with him, and because after his resurrection according to John xxi. 10, 13. he also ate bread and fish. Reference was also made to what Paul says, (1 Cor. xv. 39.) All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of *fishes*, and another of birds.”

**ANTONIO.**—Let us examine these passages of scripture a little more closely. Where is it recorded in Matt. xiv. 19. that Jesus then fasted? There is not a single trace of it in the text, and the conjecture is altogether gratuitous. But that he had fishes, was not his mere choice, but the consequence of his being with the apostles at the sea of Gennesaret, as the 13th and 22nd verses clearly show. The same may be said of John xxi. 10, 13. where the Redeemer ate fish with the apostles for this reason, because they had just caught some in the sea. As it respects the passage, 1 Cor. xv. 39. it is almost ridiculous to apply it to this subject. The apostle wishes to show, that the future body at the resurrection will not be formed like the present body, and illustrated it by examples, namely, that already in the form of earthly bodies there is a great difference. He does not seek this difference in the flesh of four footed beasts, fishes and birds, but in the difference of the form and the parts of their body. But this you must acknowledge, that the apostle ascribes a body to fishes, consequently it is absolutely ridiculous to conclude from that, that the body of fishes is not flesh.

**HENRY.**—But, Antonio, do you not consider it an exercise well pleasing to God and conducive to self government, if we occasionally abstain from palatable food? The genuine christian, who desires to gratify his lusts, must first be strong enough to deny his palate the accustomed food.

**ANTONIO.**—That may be, if it is *voluntary*, and not compulsory; it might answer, if men did not substitute for

flesh a variety of other delicate victuals. But that men please God by a selection of *particular* food; that they defile themselves on a fast-day by food which is allowed on other days; that especially there is something meritorious in it; this, dear sir, I no longer believe, because the Saviour and his apostles have taught me differently. For Jesus says, Matt. xv. 11, 18—20, “not that which goeth into the mouth, defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth; this defileth a man. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man; for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, theft, false witnesses, blasphemies. *These are things which defile a man.* But to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.” So then it is not eating flesh. For the kingdom of God is *not meat and drink*, says Paul, Romans xiv. 17, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.”—This is surely expressive language of the apostle, according to which no essential importance should ever have been attached to fasting and other works of penance. Yea, the same apostle warns us against teachers of false doctrines, I Tim. iv. 3, who “forbid to marry and command to abstain from meats, which *God hath created to be received with thanksgiving*,” and he assures us, ver. 8, “that bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” I will fast no more, dear sir; but I will exercise myself in godliness.

Verse 29. “Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.”

When I think how many churches, chapels, and monasteries, are dedicated to the Saviour, the mother Mary, the apostles, the saints and martyrs amongst us, and what great

honor we pay them, it has often occurred to me how it would be, if *in our day*, Jesus, or Peter and Paul were to revisit some rigid Catholic country, for instance, Spain or Italy, and were to teach the same things, which we now read in the writings of the evangelists and apostles? whether they would be regarded as good christians, or not rather as heretics, if they administered the cup in the sacrament, attached no particular importance to fasting, called none *father* or *holy father*, made eternal life dependent on obedience to the commandments of God, and recognised no pope, no service of the saints, or mass, holy water, monastic life, penance, indulgences, auricular confession, and many other things, by which Catholics are now distinguished? I should think that the Saviour and the apostles would not be permitted to come to Spain or Italy, and would be acknowledged as good christians only here among the Protestants—in Spain or Italy they would certainly fall into the hands of the inquisition, and be regarded by the pope, as Jesus was regarded by the Jewish high priest Caiaphas.

HENRY.—Antonio, you are surely no longer a Catholic, you have become a Protestant! take care and do not let your opinions be known!

ANTONIO.—Whether I am yet a Catholic or have already become a Protestant, I really do not know myself. But this I know, that I am a *christian*, and am truly a *genuine christian*, for I have been taught by the discourses of Christ in the evangelists, and by the doctrine of the apostles in their writings alone. I do not appear to myself to be a Catholic any more, at least I am not a good one. But I do not give myself any trouble about that, if I only dare believe that I am a good christian. But I must speak about it, dear sir; the truth must not be concealed, so that others also may be brought to acknowledge it, and not be strengthened in their errors.

HENRY.—It may do well enough here in Germany; but in Italy you would soon be silenced.

ANTONIO.—Bad enough, that there they know no better means of maintaining their faith, than by force. It does not become the successor of the apostle Peter to employ force; for when Peter (Matt. xxvi. 51, &c.) drew his sword in defence of Jesus, the Lord said “put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” I should think, that thus the pope should wait, until God promotes the true faith, in a proper manner and not by force. Jesus did not establish an inquisition, he did not allow it, he did not command it, he did not employ it.

HENRY.—I see, Antonio, that you are so well versed in the scriptures, that you have an answer for every thing. But you do wrong, in confining yourself exclusively to the bible. For we have *tradition*, which from the apostles through the bishops and holy church fathers has come down to us, which we must highly honor, for it determines many things, of which the New Testament contains nothing, and settles other things besides.

ANTONIO.—To discuss and judge the subject of tradition, requires more learning than I possess. But this I know, that it dare not contradict that, which the evangelists and apostles *have written*, for then they must have contradicted themselves; and that a knowledge of and belief in tradition are not reckoned among the things demanded as necessary to salvation. For in none of the many passages in which we are taught what is essential to salvation, is one word said about tradition. The whole matter appears to me very strange. Suppose your father had made a *written* will in presence of a magistrate and honest witnesses, and after his death there should come one of his friends and say, ‘your father also made an *oral* will and entrusted it to me, and in it, he has appointed me your guardian, transferred to me a portion of his paternal privileges, and has left me a handsome legacy;’ what would you think? If the oral

will frequently contradicted the written one, annulled many parts of it, contained a number of additional articles, made new dispositions of the property, and finally, was very much to the advantage of the man, who said your father had entrusted it to him; would you attach as much credit to it as to the written one? Or would any person find fault with you for adhering exclusively to the written one?

**HENRY.**—Your simile is lame, Antonio.

**ANTONIO.**—It may be *lame*, but *it goes!* I wish it would go into your heart!

**HENRY.**—I really believe, you wish that I should abandon catholicism.

**ANTONIO.**—I wish you were as I am, a disciple of Christ and the apostles, and ceased being a disciple of the pope and the priesthood.

**HENRY.**—Then you are no longer the latter?

**ANTONIO.**—No! I am no longer such unconditionally, only in as far as I see, that our priests teach the doctrines of the New Testament.

**HENRY.**—Then you are evangelical!

**ANTONIO.**—It may be; but the gospel was in existence before the pope and all the cardinals.—(With deep solemnity) Sir! I am a poor orphan, I stand alone in the world; my kindred are also unknown to me—I was left truly destitute. You are my only friend on earth! But even at the peril of being dismissed by you, I will not conceal from you, what is in my heart. (With excitement) Really, sir, I have become a better man, even though I yet may be a sinner; a faithful servant also have you got in me. Hear, what occurred to me, when I left Rome with you. I cannot conceal it from you any longer. I once more confessed to father M—, who belongs to the Jesuits, and requested his blessing on my journey. “Go in God’s name, my son,” said he,—“but do not forget, what you owe the holy mother, the church. You are in the service of a straying sheep, which has but lately been brought to the true faith. Much of the poison of heresy imbibed in his youth

yet remains in him, and it is to be feared that he will again be drawn over to the cursed Lutheran heresy by his family and friends. The mother of God has enjoined it upon you, as a good Catholic, to watch over his faith. Observe him closely; pry into the conversation between him and his family and friends; if they become too familiar, dexterously try to excite discord and mistrust between them. You may also employ falsehood, for it is not sin, when it is done for the honor of God, and the church will absolve you from it. But above all, my son, do not neglect to communicate every thing that occurs to your master, to the reverend father N. who will give you further instructions. But this correspondence you must keep secret, and especially do not let your master discover that you are watching him. Be zealous and wise, my son, you shall be well rewarded. The reverend father will faithfully provide for you." At that time, dear sir, when I received this commission, I was very glad, and believed I would perform a good work and merit heaven, if I executed it. But since this book was presented to me in Frankfurt, and I have read it, I have changed my mind. You can be easy! I will not betray you, I will not sow discord between you and your parents, neither will I write to father N.—.

Henry ordered his servant to withdraw, for he did not wish him to be the witness of emotions which he was not able to overcome. He felt ashamed and indignant, that his servant had been employed to watch him. Father N.— was a bosom friend of Rossi, who had converted him. He saw plainly that both priests had acted in concert. He had become a Catholic from such honest and deep conviction, that it mortified him exceedingly, that any should yet doubt his sincerity and firmness. This apprehension of theirs appeared to him at the same time irreconcilable with a good cause, which trusts alone to its merits. And then, the commission about the secret correspondence and discord with his parents! With what snares was he beset, if Antonio was not honest! He felt it painfully, that they did not seek

him, but the honor of the church, and it now was clear to him, what a friend once said to him, that they make proselytes, not that they may be saved, but that the church may be filled.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### TRADITION AND THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

When the father returned, the evening conversations were resumed, and the subject of discussion was *the sources of our knowledge of the christian religion*. Henry maintained that besides the Holy Scriptures, tradition was a source of this knowledge, and defined tradition to be, that oral instruction in matters of faith, morals, church ceremonies and church government given by the apostles and transmitted by the christian bishops in an uninterrupted series. He said this was an essential point in the faith of Catholics, and hence the Council of Trent has established it; (in the first decree of session 4.) "The holy synod adopts all the books of the Old and New Testaments, *and the traditions*, those which relate to faith, as well as those which relate to morals, with equal pious reverence. He who wilfully rejects the traditions, let him be accursed."

The father acknowledged that he was not well acquainted with the nature of tradition, and requested Bernhard to converse with Henry on that subject, with which he readily complied.

**HENRY.**—You will grant, dear friend, that the apostles, when they taught in the churches, must have said many more things than we now find in their epistles.

**BERNHARD.**—*More?* certainly; but whether *any thing else*, than their epistles contain, is a question, the affirmative of which you cannot prove.

HENRY.—I am satisfied with the *more*, which you grant. You will further acknowledge, that all the epistles are merely occasional writings, in which the apostles do not treat of the whole system of faith and morals, but only partially, just as they found occasion in the circumstances of the churches.

BERNHARD.—That I cannot wholly grant. It does not apply at least to the evangelists, the epistles to the Romans and Hebrews, neither to the epistle of James, nor the first of John, for their general design is to instruct the reader in all that relates to Christ and his doctrines.

HENRY.—But you will grant, that Paul refers to this oral instruction which he gave to the churches. (2 Thes. ii. 15. 1 Cor. xi. 2, 23, 24. 1. Tim. vi. 20.)

BERNHARD.—I grant this, and confess that we Protestants would diligently search and highly esteem this oral instruction, if we had it, for it would afford an explanation of many parts of the apostolic writings. We only regret, that this instruction is lost, and that there is no where any credible account of it.

HENRY.—What? do you not know that this is the tradition of the Catholic church, that it was transmitted by the bishops, and gradually introduced into the writings of the church fathers and into the decrees of the councils.

BERNHARD.—This your church maintains, but it is not so. I have read the church fathers, and know how it is with respect to tradition.\*

HENRY.—But you must admit the general ground for tradition, namely; *whatever was believed by christians at all times, and all places, from the beginning of christianity, must necessarily be regarded as having been taught by the apostles themselves.* For it would be impossible, that an error should have become a general doctrine from the beginning.

BERNHARD.—I can admit all that, and yet you will gain nothing by it. What was taught in the beginning by all christians, that the apostolic confession contains, which

\*See Appendix XI.

our church also possesses. It is that which the fathers until the third century call the tradition of faith; that was the general faith of all churches, to which they appeal, and which they oppose to the new doctrine of the heretics. *Nothing else.* They have nothing of your mass, the adoration of saints, the pope and his power, purgatory, confession and absolution, withholding the cup in the Lord's supper, transubstantiation, seven sacraments, indulgence, pilgrimages, the rosary, holy water, and I boldly challenge you to the proof, that any of the church fathers of the first four centuries ever appealed to tradition with respect to these things. On the contrary you will find, that it is the doctrine of the apostolical confession or a similar short summary of general doctrine, that they understand by tradition.

HENRY.—I can scarcely believe this.

BERNHARD.—Then only hear. The great church father Tertullian who flourished at the end of the second, and beginning of the third century, contends in his book *de Praescriptione* against the errorists of his time, who gave out that their doctrine—they were the so called Gnostics, who boasted of superior wisdom—was taught by the apostles as a secret doctrine. Tertullian on the contrary maintains that those churches, which were undoubtedly founded by the apostles, knew nothing of that kind, but taught differently, and that the general doctrine of the apostolic churches must be regarded as the “rule of faith” (*regula fidei.*) He calls tradition the rule of faith, but he also mentions, what it contains. This he does in the 13th chapter of his book, where it is said;

“*The rule of truth* is this; there is but *one* God, and besides him there is no creator of the world; who made all things out of nothing, by his word; as the word, also called Son of God, he was at different times seen by the patriarchs, and heard by the prophets, but at last descended into the Virgin Mary, became flesh, and was born as the man Jesus Christ; who afterwards proclaimed a new law and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven; was crucified, rose on

the third day and ascended to heaven, and sits at the right hand of God; who sends the power of the Holy Ghost in His stead, by whom believers are directed; who will come again, to bring the saints to eternal life and the enjoyment of the promised heavenly rewards, but to condemn the unholy to everlasting fire, after both with the restoration of their bodies shall have risen again. This rule (of faith) proceeds from Christ, &c."

Besides Tertullian, let us only hear the celebrated bishop of Lyons, Irenaeus, who died about the year 202, and who in his book against the heretics also refers to the tradition of the general church, and in the 10th chapter of the first book writes the following confession, which he also (in ch. 22nd) calls the *rule of truth*.

"The church dispersed over the whole earth was taught by the apostles and their disciples, that there is but one God, the Almighty Father, the maker of heaven and of earth, and the sea, and all that is in them; and one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became flesh for our salvation; and the Holy Ghost who through the prophets proclaimed the institution of the new covenant, the advent of Christ, his birth from a virgin, his sufferings, his resurrection, his bodily ascension to heaven, and his second coming, that he might complete all things, awaken all men,—hold a righteous judgment over all,—consign the wicked to everlasting fire, but to give life and immortality to the righteous and holy, and to all such as have kept his commandments." This faith, adds Irenaeus, "the christian churches in all countries held as unanimously, as if they had all lived in one house. Let the learned alter nothing of the sense of this faith, but only seek to illustrate it further."

From the latter you see, dear friend, that at that time they had no tradition about the more specific explanation of these doctrines, and that the faith generally adopted by the old church fathers was nothing more than what is here set down, all of which agrees precisely with the apostolic creed, and that, as no man will deny, accords perfectly with the

New Testament. Every thing additional, then, which was subsequently introduced under the name of tradition, was not transmitted from *antiquity*, but is *newly invented* doctrine, which can by no means be regarded as apostolic. With respect to the more explicit illustration of these doctrines, which, as Irenaeus says, was left free to the opinions of the learned, there was so little unanimity among the church fathers, that the Jesuit Daniel Petau in his learned work on the doctrines of faith himself grants, that it is uncertain what the fathers of the first four centuries taught about the divinity of the Son and of the Spirit. The monk Paul Sarpi also says in his celebrated history of your principal council, that of Trent, that the bishops assembled there were very doubtful what authority they should ascribe to tradition, and that only at last the numerous Italian bishops and their well directed threats brought it about, that the council ascribed equal authority to tradition with the scriptures.

HENRY.—I must indeed grant you all this, but still I justify the judicial authority of tradition, by the infallibility of the church, even if this authority was established at a later day. The church has the spirit of God and hence cannot err, and Paul himself calls her (1 Tim. iii. 15.) the pillar and ground of the truth.

BERNHARD.—As respects this passage, Paul can call the church the pillar of truth, that is, of the christian doctrine, and yet nothing follows from it in favor of her infallibility. For it is the church, through which the christian doctrine is maintained and propagated in the world. Without the christian church the existence of christianity cannot be conceived. But the words, "pillar and ground of the truth" do not even belong to the word *church*, but to the following verse. That, the Catholic translator of the New Testament, Van Ess, has himself acknowledged, and has properly united them with the following verse. He has it, "The mystery of godliness is the pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy, great, &c." But when you say that

the church has the spirit of God, and hence is infallible, I ask you, whom do you comprehend as the church ?

HENRY.—The bishops assembled in council.

BERNHARD.—Have the priests alone the spirit of God and not also the laity ?

HENRY.—The priests alone for the decision of doctrines, for in that the laity have no voice. But for sanctification, the laity have also the spirit of God.

BERNHARD.—But does not John write to *all christians*, (I Ep. ii. 20.) “Ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things.” Does not Paul say to *all christians* at Ephesus, (Ephes. i. 16.) I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the father of glory may give unto you the spirit of *wisdom* and *revelation* in the knowledge of him ; the *eyes of your understanding* being enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, &c. and on what grounds will you divide the gift of the spirit, which affords both wisdom and sanctification ? and appropriate to the priests the wisdom, and to the laity, only the sanctification ? Who are ye, that ye thus prescribe to the spirit of God, and set limits to his operations ? And can there be sanctification, without knowledge ? Have not your councils determined what belongs to sanctification, when they gave their decision about penance, forgiveness of sins, the duty of unconditional faith in their declarations, and other things ? And now, dear friend, in what light will the infallibility of this priesthood appear, if you enquire into the contradictions of which they are guilty ? A few examples will suffice. The doctrine of Arius was condemned by the council of Nice in 325, but was declared as true by the council of Antioch in 341, and was finally again condemned by the council of Constantinople in 381, through the influence of the Emperor Theodosius. The doctrine of Eutychus prevailed at the council of Ephesus in 449, and was afterwards condemned at the council of Chalcedon in 451. The great councils of Constance (1414) and Basle (1431) solemnly declared

that a general council was superior to the Pope, and the high priests at Rome declared with equal solemnity in their bulls, that that was a wicked heresy. Where then is the infallibility of the priesthood? And is not the whole priesthood of the eastern church in continual controversy with the western priesthood on many points of faith? You may now then give up this infallibility.

**HENRY.**—But if you hold the church as fallible, then the case might occur, that she would embrace errors, and they would gradually become so numerous, that the truth would be wholly obscured, yea, finally altogether lost. Thus the object of christianity would be totally frustrated, which God cannot permit, and hence it is reasonable to infer that by his spirit he would make the church infallible.

**BERNHARD.**—The church is composed of men, and all men are subject to error, consequently also the priests. But such an exclusive order of men as the priesthood of the Catholic church, is exposed to double danger of erring, because it has an interest peculiar to itself—a party interest, and it is very natural and almost unavoidable that its own advantage would sway its judgment, and influence all decisions. This party interest is promoted to an extraordinary extent by the fact that the supreme head of the Catholic priests has a temporal kingdom in Italy, and the priests themselves in all Catholic countries, France excepted, possess extensive landed property, and in Spain, I might say, a kingdom in a kingdom. It would in truth be demanding something super-human, if we were to ask the priests to abolish and declare as erroneous, ceremonies, customs, and opinions, which are of great advantage to them; on the other hand, it is very natural that in their councils they should ratify, or at least not reject every thing which their power and wealth can secure, and strive to maintain it. So that we cannot think it strange of the popes, that they as *kings* of the ecclesiastical state, would never recognise the principle, that a general council was superior to them and could depose them. Easy as it is for an exclusive order of men actuated

by feelings of party interest to err, yet on the other hand it is difficult for the whole christian world to err, or that it should long continue in error, if only the investigation of truth is not hindered by prohibitions, or these investigations prematurely terminated by establishing unalterable articles of faith. Easy as it is for an *individual* to err, yet the creator has bestowed so much understanding upon men generally, that sooner or later they will be delivered from error, and finally discover the truth. Great as has been the number of errorists, by you called heretics, from the first century to the present day, yet christianity has always continued to exist, and will yet longer endure. The infallibility imputed by you to the priesthood only makes the matter worse in every respect. That the priesthood is not infallible, we have already seen, and history abundantly proves it. Even all the principal heretics came out of this infallible priesthood. The great presbyter, Tertullian became a Montanist. The arch-heretic Arius was a presbyter in Alexandria; Apolinaris, bishop of Laodicea; Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch; Netorius, bishop of Constantinople; Maletuis, bishop of Antioch, all these became heretics and founders of heresies. The bishops of half the christian world were Arians in the middle of the fourth century, and were deposed *en masse* by the emperor Theodosius. The great and lasting heresies on the doctrine of the trinity and the two natures in Christ, were particularly prevalent among the priesthood and not among the laity, and the whole priesthood was on account of these heresies split into parties, which mutually condemned each other at councils. How can men ascribe infallibility to such a priesthood?—And who originated the idea of this infallibility? Not the laity, but the priesthood itself? You see then, that the tradition of the Catholic church, the truth of which is grounded on the infallibility of the priesthood, has no foundation, and that the Evangelical church is perfectly right in holding to the *written* word of God in the holy scriptures, but not to that which a fallible priesthood in later ages wishes to declare as the word of God.

HENRY.—You have completely vanquished me, dear friend, and I really do not know what more to oppose to your arguments. It is true that half of the priesthood of the christian world was once Arian, and it was only the political usurpation of the emperor Theodosius that overthrew the Arian bishops. That I certainly do not know how to reconcile with the infallibility of tradition and of the priesthood.

FATHER.—I can add another ground, my son, which was always sufficiently strong to me as a layman, to reject that tradition professedly transmitted by the priesthood. Amongst the Jews in the time of Christ there was also an oral tradition, to which the Pharisees and Scribes attached great importance, and through which, just as in the Catholic church, many ceremonies, opinions and precepts were established, which the Mosaic law did not contain. But Jesus rejected this tradition most decisively; only read Matthew, xv. 1—9.

HENRY.—But the Mosaic law contained every thing the Jew was to believe and practice. But it cannot be proved, that it was the object of the writers of the New Testament, that it should contain every thing which the christian must believe and practice. Hence tradition was necessary to supply what was wanting.

FATHER.—There is nothing wanting. You have heard that until the fourth century, that only was regarded as essential christian faith, which our apostles' creed contains, and that was distinguished by the name of tradition. All this you will find complete and full in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. You will also scarcely deny that the gospels were written for the instruction of those who desire to become christians, and certainly contain every thing which is necessary to be known for salvation.

MOTHER.—On this matter we have decisive testimony in John xx. 30, &c. where it is said; "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye

might believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and *that believing ye might have life through his name.*"

The Saviour also says, John xvii. 3. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." And on these subjects the scriptures surely give us full and sufficient instruction.

HENRY.—You always drive me from the field with the scriptures, dear mother, and I see that you are as conversant with the scriptures as ever. But still I think I can easily prove, that the bible is a very unsafe source of knowledge of the christian faith. But I think we had better postpone this subject until to-morrow.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE NECESSITY OF AN INFALLIBLE JUDGE TO UNITY OF FAITH— THE FREEDOM OF OPINION AMONG PROTESTANTS.

HENRY.—It occasioned me not a little uneasiness when Rossi incidentally brought forward the following argument against the Evangelical church.

"The Evangelical church holds exclusively to the bible and rejects the authority of the infallible church. But the bible is written in dead languages and must be explained. But who will explain it? Your theologians ever since the reformation have contended about a great number of passages, and are not even now agreed; and they never will be of one opinion, because to effect unity there must be an *infallible* interpreter, which we have in the church and tradition. With you, every theologian proposes his private opinions, and you have nearly as many theological systems as learned divines. Nothing but confusion arises from such a state of things. What one adopts, the other rejects; many will not approve of any thing in the christian system,

which cannot be proved by the light of reason ; some try to explain away from the scriptures the doctrine respecting the devil, others, the miracles and prophecies, and others, this and that doctrine. Your creeds do not bind your teachers, for you desire freedom of conscience and of investigation. The consequence is, that the most diverse opinions and caprices are published, so that the people do not know what to believe,—they become confused and finally believe nothing at all. Hence, your liberty in teaching what you please, your want of an infallible judge in matters of faith is a great evil, which will yet lead to the total dissolution of your church. This evil can only be opposed by abolishing all freedom of instruction ; by unconditionally submitting to an infallible judge of faith, whose decisions dare not be investigated, and even the grounds of which dare not be asked. This judge of faith we have in the pope and priesthood, whose declarations all must submit to, without the liberty of examining them. By this means the valuable blessing of a perfect unity of faith is secured to us. What one believes, all believe ; one and the same creed is adopted by all, and what is once established as an article of faith by a council of priests, that can never become a subject of doubt."

I knew nothing satisfactory that I could reply to my friend. What say you to it?

FATHER.—I would first reply by merely denying that your vaunted infallible judge of faith, the pope, and the priests, ever accomplished that which you attribute to them. For as respects the interpretation of the scriptures, men were never of the same opinion in the church.

BERNHARD.—Only read the commentaries of Clemens of Alexandria, Tertullian, Augustin, then in later ages, those of the scholastics, and you will find that they are much—much more discordant, than the commentaries of the present theologians can possibly be. The reason of this is, that the principles of correct scripture interpretation were unknown. But since these have gradually become better known in the Evangelical church, and more firmly establish-

ed, divines have become more unanimous on the sense of the scriptures, and this unanimity would be more general, if there were not always some, who are anxious to make the scriptures say what they wish, or think they ought to have said. But such foolish caprices as the church-fathers had by thousands, and which the Romish church declares as obligatory, none of our theologians now dare to utter; for instance, when Clemens of Alexandria, (Paedagog III. 10.) employs the words of the Saviour, Matt. xviii. 20. ("Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I will be in the midst of them,") to prove that marriage is pleasing in the sight of God, and interprets the word "*three*" as meaning the husband, the wife and their child! Or when Irenaeus (Against heretics, IV. 12.) explains the three spies whom Rahab sheltered at Jericho, to be the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But when you say, that we have almost as many theological systems as distinguished divines, I reply that the case was not different in the early church, and in the Romish church. Tertullian had a different system from Clemens and Origin; Augustin had another; Gregory Nazianus still another. Amongst the Scholastics, Anselm, Thomas, John Erigena, Duns Scotus, Occam, Biel and others until the reformation, all had their peculiar systems. The popes and the priesthood could as little prevent this as an uncounted number of so called heresies, the majority of which proceeded from this priesthood itself. Of what avail then was your infallible priesthood to you? It did not prevent a difference of opinion; this it could not do, but the fact of the matter was essentially this; the majority always persecuted and condemned the minority, and the party that was put down by force was always wrong and heretical, and the party that conquered was orthodox and right. This, in a few words, is the history of your ecclesiastical infallibility, which exhibits your position of the utility of an infallible judge of faith in all its nakedness.

**WILHELMINA.**—I should think that it requires two parties to complete this matter; one which maintains its infallibili-

ty,—the other which believes it, and blindly subjects itself. Of what avail is infallibility to the first, if the second does not believe it and takes the liberty of judging for itself? Hence the unity of faith is but little promoted by your infallible Pope and his bishops, if they have no means of convincing the laity of their infallibility. What means have the Popes used for that purpose?

Henry was confused and did not reply.

FATHER.—According to history, the means were outlawry, sentences of condemnation, the inquisition, and persecutions of every kind, which the Popes, the clergy and the princes who aided them, brought down upon the refractory with tremendous violence.

WILHELMINA.—In that they showed their infallibility pretty much as our neighbor the wild blacksmith, who is accustomed to convince his wife of the correctness of his opinions, with an iron rod.

FATHER.—The refractory were silenced, and with that the priests were satisfied. They did not certainly convince them, for as is well known, conviction cannot be forced. The Romish priesthood has itself experienced that; for to this very hour the controversy is prosecuted, whether the Pope is always infallible, or only in certain cases?—whether he can be judged by a general church council? Whether his decrees alone are valid, or only after ratification by the church? Whether he alone is the bishop of the church and all other bishops only his vicars, or whether he is only first among the bishops, and equal with them? The popes indeed, have decided all these to their own advantage, and have declared the contrary opinion as heretical, but the other bishops have never yet believed them. They have rather expressed the opposite opinion, but that the popes again have not believed. Hence the infallible priests have never yet been able to maintain or even to produce unity of faith among themselves, to say nothing of the laity.

HENRY.—I see plainly, that the Romish priesthood could not create a perfect unity of faith. But it is certainly very natural that controversies about faith should be decided by the clergy.

FATHER.—Certainly, but only by *argument* and *good reasons*, and not that their decisions should be arbitrary and subjected to no further examination. For no man can be obligated to a blind faith. It is immoral to regard any thing as a duty, of the propriety of which you are not convinced. Jesus and the apostles do not demand a blind faith.

HENRY.—But Paul writes to Timothy who was bishop of Crete, (Tit. i. 9—13,) that he should “*stop the mouths*” of “gainsayers.” Yea, in verse 13, he says, “*rebuke them sharply* that they may be sound in the faith.” In this he certainly authorizes the bishops to employ severity in holding gainsayers to the faith.

FATHER.—You draw a very unsound, I may say, a foolish conclusion, my son. The apostle is only speaking to Titus about rebuking the perverse; and because the Cretans were as the apostle says, (vr. 12.) “evil beasts and slow bellies,” he admonishes him, (vr. 13.) “to rebuke them sharply,” that is, for their immoral and licentious practices. But thus to rebuke, does not mean “to employ severity in keeping them to the faith.” Titus was only commissioned to teach and to rebuke, but it is not said, you must with all severity insist upon others, that they believe what you say, for what you and other bishops say is infallible, and the laity are bound unconditionally to believe it. This is what your priests maintain, and by which they set themselves up against the apostle’s will, *as lords of your faith!*

HENRY.—But surely the apostles did not allow the laity to examine and judge what they delivered to them; and consequently the successors of the apostles, the priests have the right to demand unconditional obedience to the faith from the laity.

FATHER.—But the great apostle Paul writes to the christians at Corinth, (1 Cor. x. 15.) and says, “I speak as to

wise men, *judge ye what I say.*" Again, 1 Cor. i. 24. "Not for that we have *dominion over your faith*, but are helpers of your joy." But that the priesthood is not infallible, and has not dominion over the faith of the laity through the Holy Ghost, as is maintained, is abundantly shown by the rule, which the apostle lays down to the christians of Thessalonica, (1 Thes. v. 20, 21.) "*Despise not prophesyings; Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*" But what on the other hand did the Catholic bishops at Trent say, "*We command, that no one dare to believe or teach otherwise than is here established.*" How modestly the great apostle speaks, and how arrogantly the insignificant bishop at Trent speaks directly the contrary. In vain then, did the apostle Peter, (1 Pet. v. 2, 3.) warn the christian bishops against the proud conceit of being lords and judges in the church, when he says, "*feed the flock of God,—not as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*"

**HENRY.**—But experience has proved, that where liberty of faith is allowed, very different opinions are entertained and published, and thus the people are perplexed.

**FATHER.**—Different views on religious subjects have always been entertained in the Romish church as well as in ours, both when men were forced in their faith, and when they were free to think as they pleased. But, unless these different opinions are persecuted, experience proves, that they have no effect on the essential substance of religion, that is, on the practice of religion. The different learned systems of our religious teachers exert no essential influence on their official duties, as long as they do not become heretical in the pulpit. It can be said of all, that they aim at making their congregations more perfect in christian knowledge and virtue. I have heard many evangelical preachers during my travels, but did not find one whose doctrine gave me offence; all edified me. You need only read the great multitude of printed evangelical sermons, to convince you, that their authors, although of different sentiments, yet all labour for the *same* end, namely, to promote christian life

among the people. There are some indeed, who make the pulpit the theatre of learned brawling, but they are few and they are finally silenced, because the people withdraw themselves, for they desire to have edification and not controversy.

MOTHER.—But even if it were not so, yet every christian has the bible for himself, and truly, the will of God with respect to us and what we must do to be saved, is so simply and plainly written in it, that *on that point* even a layman cannot doubt. Remember what I told you before on this subject. I think that men entertaining different opinions, can still lead christian lives. I only hold those religious opinions as injurious which make men indifferent about virtue, secure in their sins, and inspire a false, delusive consolation. Such opinions are indeed erroneous and superstitious.

BERNHARD.—You are perfectly right, dear madam. The effect which a doctrine has upon the conduct of a man, is a principal mark of its truth or falsehood. This Jesus himself says, when he warns against false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, and lays down this rule: "*by their fruits ye shall know them.*" And why shall we not follow the church of the early centuries, when, as Irenaeus assures us, the simple doctrines of the apostles' creed were maintained, and liberty was given to the theologians to think of other controverted points as they pleased. Christianity was free, and grew and flourished. It will not now decline, even though this difference of opinions exists.

HENRY.—Even if I should grant this, still it is very evident that this liberty of investigation in the evangelical church has also attacked the doctrines of the apostles' creed. Men believe that the name *Protestant*, with which many are so much delighted, allows them the privilege of protesting against every thing, which they cannot discover by their own unassisted reason, and they take pride in gradually rejecting all the peculiarities of christianity, and maintaining nothing but natural religion.

BERNHARD.—I do not deny, that the name *protestant* has been the occasion of some mischief. Some men have abused it. But the name is not suited to us. The evangelical states of the German Empire received the name of protestant three hundred years ago, as it is well known, because at the second diet held at Spire in 1529, they *protested* against the revocation of the power which had been granted by the former diet to every prince, of managing ecclesiastical matters as he thought proper. These protesting princes did not thereby intend to secure to every one of their subjects the right of doing what he pleased in the affair of religion, but merely to prevent the operation of the decrees of the diet in their states. The name protestant, never should have been substituted for the name *evangelical*. The *protestant* states of the former kingdom were such, as claimed the right of constituting and managing church matters in their country according to the directions of the divine word, and protested against the authority of the pope or emperors, to forbid this. Hence that use of the word protestant, which was lately attempted to be made, and which you properly denounced, is an abuse. Our church expressly recognizes an authority to which every christian must subject himself, namely, the word of God in the holy Scriptures; how then can Protestantism consist in the rejection of all authority, excepting reason? But still it is true, that since the time of Frederick the Great there arose in our church a spirit of illumination, which would explain every thing that is peculiar in christianity, but what a delusion!

HENRY.—I am glad that you acknowledge this, and I hope, that you will also grant that the Catholic church has kept herself free from that, and that a unity of faith has also existed in her, of which the evangelical church is totally destitute.

BERNHARD.—There you are wrong, dear friend. That liberalism which ridiculed genuine christianity and scarcely left natural religion untouched, came from France, *catholic* France. Voltaire, who signed his letters Christomoque

( mocker of Christ) and boasted that "he alone was able to overthrow the edifice which twelve men (the apostles) had erected." Boubanger, Frenet, de la Mettrie and others, who called themselves philosophers, were the men, who transplanted this mockery of religion to Berlin and Germany. But what awakened this infidelity in France, was the strenuous perseverance of the Romish church in all errors and abuses. In a country where the massacre of St. Bartholomews was witnessed, in which after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, the twentieth part of three millions of reformed were in a short time horribly murdered, and more than half a million driven away, no wonder that a combination of all the more enlightened men was formed against such abominable cruelties of the Romish church. That they should attempt to overthrow christianity with the Romish church, was a lamentable, but a natural mistake. Such extravagance is opposed to the spirit of the Evangelical church, and you must grant, that it was evangelical writers who conquered that bold infidelity and finally exhibited it in all its nakedness.

HENRY.—But you have a party among the evangelical, the so called *Rationalists*, who elevate reason above the scriptures, and who attempt to reduce christianity to mere natural religion.

BERNHARD.—That we lament, but has not the Romish church also such a party? Were not the French liberalists, the Encyclopedists, also Catholics? Were not they Catholics who in the revolution abolished christianity, but yet were magnanimous enough to decree, that France should at least have a God to believe in? We had very few such free thinkers, and not one of them was a teacher of religion. But those were also very few who denied divine influence of every kind in christianity, of whom but one was a teacher of religion and he was deposed from office. But those who are now called *Rationalists*, with all their errors, are very different from these. They at least universally regard christianity as a divine institution established for the salvation of men, they

consider Jesus Christ as sent by God, and the holy scriptures as containing the eternal and true word of God.

**HENRY.**—But still it is not good that there should be such a diversity of religious sentiment.

**BERNHARD.**—But how will you prevent it? God has so created man that he can only believe on good evidence, and this evidence has not the same effect on every man. This is the case in the catholic just as in the evangelical church, and the difference is only this, that the Romish church by punishment and the inquisition forces to silence or to hypocrisy, those who have other sentiments in matters of faith, but the evangelical church leaves the decision of such things to the force of truth and argument. I should think that the latter was most conformable to the will of God, who, if he had desired perfect unanimity of religious opinion, would have found other means to that effect than the horrors of the inquisition and the condemnation of heretics, in which fallible men punish those presumed to be erroneous, by taking away their life or liberty, or property or reputation, without being able to convince them to the contrary. You cannot then bring it as a well grounded objection against any church, that parties exist within her pale. This objection, the heathen also brought against christians of the early ages, of which Clemens of Alexandria (*Stromat vii. 15.*) correctly says:

"They (the heathen) say, that they cannot believe us (christians) because of the different opinions and parties existing among us. There are also parties and different opinions amongst the Jews and Greeks, and yet you do not say, that on that account no one should be a philosopher or a follower of the Jewish religion. The Lord has said before, that tares should be among the wheat. Shall a man for this reason never make a contract, because many break it?

**HENRY.**—You do not intend to maintain that diversity of religious opinion is useful and desirable? That certainly

can never have been the conviction of the church, which always must insist upon unity of faith.

**BERNHARD.**—I do honestly believe, that diversity of views on unessential points is salutary, and prevents narrowness of opinion and intellectual languor, which are the death of religious activity. Just as God did not wish men to become virtuous without conflict with sin, so he did not desire that we should become wise without conflict with error. This conflict of opinions it is true, awakens in many a blind party spirit, but it is still to most men a beneficial excitement to learn and understand the truth. The controversy between the christians converted from Judaism and those from heathenism in the apostolical church, was of much benefit; it produced the apostolical resolution, which made christianity forever independent of Judaism. (Acts xv.) Hence the old church fathers did not lament this diversity of opinion as you do. “By comparison with error says Origen (Homil. in numb. ix. 1.) truth only shines more brilliantly.” Were the doctrines of the church not attacked, and not encompassed by the opinions of heretics, our faith would not be so pure, and not appear so well investigated and proved. But hence the attacks of gainsayers are directed against the general doctrine, that our faith may not slumber from inactivity, but be filed to smoothness and beauty by frequent collision. For this reason, says the apostle (1 Cor. xi. 19.) “there must be also heresies amongst you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” In like manner the venerable bishop of Carthage, Cyprian, expresses himself. (de unit. eccles. p. 197.) If then the church of the first three centuries, although persecuted with fire and sword, endured different religious opinions among her members without injury, we at present, when the church is at peace, will have less harm to fear from diversity of sentiment.

**WILHELMINA.**—I should think, that the beautiful saying, “that a virtue, which requires watching, is not worth the watching,” is also applicable to truth. A truth which re-

quires force and punishment to prevent it from extinction, is not worth the labour bestowed on it,—it is not a truth.

HENRY.—But the liberty of the use of the scriptures, which you allow to the unlearned, has certainly led to much confusion and fanaticism.

BERNHARD.—It was not the fault of the scriptures. Men became fanatics without the use of the bible. Witness the Mystics in your own church. But even if diversity of sentiment arises from liberty of opinion and scripture interpretation, or should a few christians occasionally be led into extravagance, it would be an unavoidable, but an unimportant evil that could be easily endured, and which as abundant experience shows, is most safely met by mild persuasion. But to employ for this purpose the desperate means which the Romish church uses, and to subject all christians unconditionally to the caprice of the priesthood, and to pursue with excommunication and punishment as heretics, all those who doubt their infallibility, is to me such intolerable tyranny over the conscience, that every other evil appears infinitely smaller. Why should *all* be deprived of a privilege allowed by nature and by no means to be forced from us, because *a few* among thousands abuse it? Is the whole state converted into a mad house because a few citizens are insane? The rule by which you abolish all liberty of investigation, and prescribe a blind faith in a few hundred priests, in order to prevent the circulation of one or another erroneous opinion, appears to me to be acting just about as rationally, as if a great state would prohibit navigation to its subjects, because now and then a ship is wrecked, and grant the privilege only to some inhabitants of the islands, (for instance, Spain to the inhabitants of Majorca.)

HENRY.—I see plainly that the expedient of obligating all the laity to an unconditional faith in what the priests say, is a foolish one.

BERNHARD.—Only pursue the matter to the end! The few hundred bishops, who assembled at the councils since the fourth century, are to have the right of prescribing to

the millions of christians of their own time and of all subsequent ages an unalterable creed! Who will ensure to us their wisdom and impartiality? How few of them are well enough known to us, to trust them? Did they not live in times of great excitement, in which the judgment is liable to be perplexed, and when men are not qualified to take a dispassionate view of subjects? Do we not see from many of their writings, that they interpreted the Bible very differently, that the majority did not at all understand the Hebrew language, and many of them not even the Greek? Had they been inspired by the Holy Ghost, as you maintain, they would have been unanimous in the establishment of the doctrines,—they would have spoken as it were, with *one* tongue by *one* inspiration, as the prophets of old. But they disputed, entertained different opinions, and were forced, like other men, to come to conclusions by argument, and thus were dependent on their own powers. And sometimes their meetings were stormy enough. The council of Ephesus in 449, supported its opinions by soldiers armed with swords, and monks with clubs. The council of Trent, so decisive for the interests of the Romish church, was frequently in the greatest discord, and the bishops wrangled so fiercely that there was danger of a total dissolution, so that at last the archbishop of Palermo, Tagliava, threw himself upon his knees in the midst of the assembly and with tears and outstretched hands, begged the bishops to conduct themselves decently and come to an agreement. The number of priests also at these councils who had the right of voting, was always very small, and it is indeed altogether unfair, that a few hundred priests, amongst whom there have always been many stupid and few learned heads, should prescribe a system of faith to the 125,000,000 of Catholics who now may be living in the world, and among whom there are many learned, wise and good men. When the council of Trent was opened, there were only twenty-five priests present entitled to vote, their number gradually increased it is true, but even at the end of the council there

were but two hundred and twenty-five voters, of whom the Italian clergy alone composed more than the half. The most of the resolutions of this council however, were passed by less than one hundred votes. And are these few persons to represent the whole christian world, and be able to prescribe a faith for ever valid to all christians to the end of time, and is every one who dares to reject any article, to suffer as a heretic in reputation, liberty or life? Here truly, if any where, the warning of the apostle is applicable, (1. Cor. vii. 23.) "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." And I would ask, if God had found it good to make the priesthood infallible by his spirit, why did he often permit a great part of the priesthood to fall into error and heresy, which again had to be condemned at other expensive councils and not without violence, by another part of the priesthood?

HENRY.—I know not what to reply to that. But what expedient would you propose, for maintaining the necessary unity of faith?

BERNHARD.—None at all;—Unity of faith in your sense is not necessary, because it is *not possible*. Hence, Jesus also (Matt. xiii. 24—30.) was willing that the wheat and the tares should be left together until the harvest. It is not a part of the plan of God to deprive the human mind of all self dependence by means of the bare letter of creeds, and to produce such a unity as a clock-maker wishes, when he sets several clocks to the same hour. In every age divine truth has been differently viewed by different men, and yet it has not been destroyed. If it were not so, two branches of history would not now exist, namely, that of biblical doctrines, and that of christian creeds and the changes and difference of doctrines. Then, if a complete identity of all religious opinions is not possible, and can be attained by no expedient; if the Romish priests are not qualified for the office of infallible judges of faith, and could never produce or maintain the unity of faith, then it is folly, to subject the laity to the declarations of the priesthood,

and thereby fetter the conscience and enslave the mind, which not only fails of its design completely, but is also highly injurious.

HENRY.—But still it appears to me, as though there were a certain unity and perpetuity of faith produced in the Romish church by the judicial authority of the priesthood.

FATHER.—You say right : “*a certain* ;” for I have before showed you the true character of this boasted unity of faith. It is indeed only *a certain* unity, for it was produced, not by the force of sound argument, but by the force of external power, that is, by the fiercest persecutions of those, who would not believe without good grounds, for which reason it is not a true, internal unity, but specious, external, and hence exceedingly unworthy of confidence.

BERNHARD.—Indeed, your professed unity and perpetuity of faith is partly, a mere *outward show*, partly a *very great evil*.

HENRY.—I should like to hear the proof of that ! If you produce it, I will recall every thing I said this evening against your church.

BERNHARD.—I can and will produce it. Tell me, do you mean this by unity of faith, that the *creeds and confessions* of the church remain the same and agree with each other ; or this, that all Catholic *christians entertain precisely the same opinions* founded on the creeds and no others ?—certainly the latter, for we have the former unity of confessions, and to a much greater extent than the Romish church, in which popes and councils have so often publicly contradicted, and condemned each other.

HENRY.—I also understand it in the latter sense ; for on that account a creed is established, that all may have the same view of christian doctrine, and hence in our church the creeds are patterns of faith for each individual, whereas the Evangelical church regards yours not as patterns, but only as *evidences* of that, which the church acknowledges as the meaning of the holy Scriptures.

BERNHARD.—Perfectly right! but do you think it possible that all men with the best intentions will understand a formula of doctrine in the same way, or will they not rather interpret it very differently?

HENRY.—(Reluctantly) Certainly experience teaches that men are not likely to take the same view of a subject.

BERNHARD.—Say rather, it is impossible. All for instance, acknowledge the formula; we believe in *one God*. But how different are the conceptions of christians concerning God? The unlettered man conceives him a person in human form; the enthusiast, a light, which is stationed at one place as the focus of all life; another, a spirit pervading the universe; another, an abstract idea, and at the same time the cause of all the laws of nature; again another, an undefinable something, exalted above human conception, incomprehensible to the understanding, and only to be apprehended by faith and feeling. It is just the same with respect to men's conceptions of the trinity, angels, original sin, sacraments, church, resurrection, purgatory, heaven, hell, and other things. The word is an empty sound, which can give us no idea if we had it not before. Language is only the sign of an idea; it only awakens the ideas in the mind, *which we had before*. Hence we must *ourselves* form our ideas of supernatural things from the instructions of others, and our own reflection. This process every one must go through for himself, and it is this which produces an unavoidable difference of conception about the invisible subjects of religious faith, because men are infinitely different in natural talent, habits of thought, industry and apprehension, and hence never view a subject exactly in the same light. And hence that unity of faith so loudly boasted of in your church, is nothing more than that which we have, namely, a unity of *language in the public confessions*.

HENRY.—But cannot these confessions be expressed with so much precision, that it is not possible to think differently about them, but that all who understood the language must entertain the same idea? I should think, that the

Athanasian creed for example, speaks so precisely, that it must necessarily create in all the same ideas of the doctrine of the Trinity.

**BERNHARD.**—It is certain that this is the most precise and least equivocal creed we have, and yet theologians have disputed, whether the Trinity is an attribute of God, or something else; all the illustrations which have been attempted, produced a different result, and either destroyed the unity of the divine being or the distinction of the persons. Your popes themselves saw, that a unity of faith was not secured by the decrees of the council of Trent, and hence they publicly proclaimed that no one should presume to interpret the decrees and language of the council of Trent; but that this is the exclusive privilege of the popes. They really established in Rome a particular commission of priests for this object. Thus in truth they make to the world this remarkable acknowledgment, that the meaning of the public confessions is variously apprehended, and that a general council is not competent to produce unity of faith among christians.

**HENRY.**—I must confess, that this *committee of explanation* to which the decrees of the council of Trent are referred, is in open contradiction to what is maintained, namely, that the creeds of councils produced unity of faith.

**BERNHARD.**—To pursue the matter to its legitimate results, we might say, that the explanations of this committee needed explanation; for that purpose another must be appointed, and for the arbitrement of this one, again another, and so on. Thus the whole priesthood would be nothing but a series of committees, which explained each other's explanations, and on which no final decision could be made, because the last as well as the first would be understood by the faithful in different ways.

**HENRY.**—But what then does the Evangelical church do? Where does she look for the final decision?

**BERNHARD.**—The first and final decision we seek in the holy scriptures.

HENRY.—And on what authority do you believe that the instructions of the scriptures are infallible?

BERNHARD.—Certainly not on the authority of one or several men, but on the authority of *argument*, which every one has liberty to advance, because by argument alone a genuine and lasting conviction is made, and conviction upon good grounds only is worthy the dignity of religion and rational man. Paul also tells us *prove all things; hold fast to that which is good.*

HENRY.—But this occasions among you a great variety of opinions.

BERNHARD.—That is true, and we do not try to prevent it, because as I have showed, God has so created men, that every one is a living responsible being in himself, and must arrive at the truth by the exercise of his own powers. This variety of views among individuals does no harm to the grand object, namely, christian life, and affords us the opportunity at least, of acquitting ourselves of the duty of sincerity. But the assumed infallibility of your priesthood in councils, renders it impossible for the Romish church to correct an error once committed, or an abuse once established. Your council of Trent about 200 years ago adopted purgatory, masses for souls, withholding the cup, transubstantiation, celibacy of the clergy, the damnation of all who are not papists, indulgences, satisfaction by penance, and other things as *eternal* articles of faith, and it is in vain; that now so many sensible Catholics desire an alteration. In a church which claims to be infallible, error is eternal, and proscription and punishment support this error as irreversible truth. By this means the Romish church comes into inextricable conflict with the progress of the sciences and social cultivation. She cannot, like the Evangelical church, keep pace with these things, but she must sink in the stream of time, or she must try powerfully to check the developement of the human mind, or to bring back again the times of the middle ages, in which she sprung up, and then only could flourish. And to accomplish that is the avow-

ed object of the Romish priesthood at the present day, but which can be as little effected, as if an attempt were made to bring a full grown man back again to childhood. Our public confessions on the other hand, are not intended as patterns of faith or prescriptions, but are only evidences of the views which men entertained of the doctrines of the scriptures at the reformation. We then can correct an error if it is discovered, and avail ourselves of all the improvements in the science of interpretation, but in essential points, this has not been necessary. Hence the gospel of Jesus will endure and be extended, but that of Rome and Trent will decay and perish.

HENRY.—I am myself almost persuaded, that we boast too much of perpetuity and unity of faith in our church;—that difference of religious views is unavoidable, and that the defence and explanation of the word of God by argument is still the best..

WILHELMINA.—If it were not presumptuous in me to take part in this learned controversy, I would also have a word to say to enliven your serious faces a little.

FATHER.—Truth may lie concealed in a jest; let us hear !

WILHELMINA.—The scriptures say to the woman, “thy desire shall be (subject) to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” This is very plain, but yet in all ages it has been differently understood.. The inhabitant of the east was the lord of his wife in the strictest sense of the word, and she his servant. Among the Greeks the wife was also subjected to servitude, although in a milder form.. Bernhard explained this matter to me very beautifully. You know how that expression is understood now. Many ministers when they come to the words “he shall rule over thee” in the form of matrimony, add “*in all reasonable cases.*” But what is gained thereby? Every wife and every husband have their peculiar views of these “reasonable cases,” and they would hardly agree in sentiment, if a whole book were written on that subject. Yea, if an explanation were given by a whole assembly of infallible popes, it would be no bet-

ter, for every wife will never be any thing else than she can be, either mistress or servant. It depends altogether upon the relation she sustains to the man whom she has received as her husband, with respect to talents, accomplishments, respectability, character, influence and the like. It appears to me to have been thus already in ancient times, for I think that Sarah and her daughter-in-law Rebecca interpreted the old saying, "he shall rule over thee," in their own way, although in their times the strictest interpretation was generally prevalent. But what injury is to result from a different interpretation of that passage among wives, I really cannot see. Until now at least, the world and domestic life have always proceeded along tolerably well.

**HENRY.**—Yes, you ladies! you interpret every thing as you please and in your own favor. But it would become you very well, if you all said, as the virtuous Mary did, "behold the handmaiden of the Lord!"

**WILHELMINA.**—Yes, but Mary when she said this, had not a selfish, growling bear of a husband before her, but—an angel. We do not read that Mary ever said any thing like that to Joseph, her husband. If indeed the men were all angels—

**BERNHARD.**—(Interrupting her,) and the women all angels, then they would be on an equality. But jesting apart! You see, dear Henry, that the views of men about the formulas of faith will always be various, and that there could not be popes and councils enough to decide every thing, and to drive every thing into the heads of men in the same way. But still every church may continue to have her written creeds. Nothing is however, gained but a unity of language in the public formulas, and not a similarity of views in the understandings of men. Variety of religious opinion is natural, and cannot be avoided. Hence it is wrong, to condemn each other as heretics on this account, and to employ authority and violence to force men to entertain the same views on this subject. It is this

violence which renders religious opinions dangerous, for it perpetuates error, begets enthusiasm and hatred, and retards the natural developement of the human mind.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE PRIESTHOOD AND CONSECRATION.

One principal argument in favor of the Romish church, which had deeply rooted itself in the unfurnished mind of Henry, was the doctrine concerning the *prieshtood*, which he introduced for discussion the next evening. He had been convinced, that the Catholic priests were the only persons divinely authorized to give religious instruction and administer the sacraments, and that they were fully empowered to forgive sins. The mother thought that this was a subject which deserved no investigation, inasmuch as little depended on it; but the father maintained the contrary, inasmuch as the doctrine concerning the priesthood was a principal ground of the Catholic church, presumptuous in its character and encroaching exceedingly on the rights of others, and Bernhard observed that the proselyters of ancient and modern times had attempted to impress very deeply on the minds of the people, the objection that the Evangelical clergy had no right to the office they sustained. To prevent unnecessary dispute, they at the commencement granted to Henry, that Jesus and the apostles designed that there should be teachers and officers in the church, inasmuch as the apostles appointed presbyters and deacons in the congregations, or permitted them to be appointed by the churches. The father and Bernhard argued, that on this was founded the legitimacy of the clerical office establish-

ed in the Evangelical church, and then asked Henry why he controverted this legitimacy?

**HENRY.**—The Romish church teaches, that Jesus and the apostles not only appointed teachers and officers in the churches, as you think, but that they established a distinct priestly order, to which belongs exclusively, and without the participation of the laity, the government of the church, the right to teach, to administer the sacraments, to forgive sins, and to decide controversies. Hence, without the priest, the layman can do nothing. The priest must baptize him, and thus he first becomes a christian. The priest must confirm him, must absolve him at confession, offer the sacrifice of mass for him, help him out of purgatory, and by all these means unlock for him the gates of Paradise, which the priest alone can do. Finally, it is the priestly order, which on account of its infallibility, has the exclusive right of determining what the layman must believe as true, and reject as false, and what is real sanctification, and the proper means to promote it.

**FATHER.**—Then the Catholic priests are not *guardians* of the souls of the laity, but *lords* of their souls; their unlimited monarchs, because in matters of religion and salvation they have not only executive authority over the laity, but legislative. The laity are—pardon the comparison!—the negroes, and the priests, the planters. We have no such priests in the Evangelical church.

**HENRY.**—You cannot have them; for the rights of the priesthood are derived from the apostles, and are only communicated by priestly consecration. Hence they can be possessed only by that priesthood, which descends from the apostles in an uninterrupted chain of consecrations, and thus perpetuates and communicates these priestly gifts. The Catholic clergy can show historically the series of their bishops up to the apostles, consequently, derive their priesthood as genuine, from its founder, Christ; but the Evangelical clergy cannot do this; they can only derive their ordination and authority from the founders of the reformation,

Luther and Zwingli, who had it not in their power to found a priesthood.

FATHER.—Have you forgotten, my son, that Luther and Zwingli were consecrated priests of the Romish church, and also trace their consecration to the apostles, and could impart it to the clergy of the Evangelical church? Have you forgotten, that at the time of the reformation, very many Romish clergymen in Saxony, in the imperial towns, in all Germany and Switzerland, and also in Denmark and Sweden became Evangelical clergymen, and hence brought over with them the consecration of the Catholic church into ours?

HENRY.—Indeed, dear father, I did not think of that.—But I should think that Luther and the other Catholic clergymen had lost the consecration, inasmuch as they declared themselves independent of the Catholic church, and of the high priest at Rome.

FATHER.—(Smiling,) That is heresy, my son. You know certainly that your church and the council of Trent have established the position, that consecration imparts a sacerdotal character *that cannot be lost*,—which is not destroyed by deposition and expulsion from the church, and which of course, could not be lost by all the Romish clergymen, who became Evangelical. Once a priest, always a priest.

HENRY.—You are right, father. We must grant that Luther, Zwingli and others always remained legally consecrated priests. But I believe, they could not consecrate others, because they separated from the Pope and Catholic priesthood, and fell into heresy.

FATHER.—Their heresy consisted in this, that they ascribed to the holy scriptures a higher authority than to the decree of popes and the priesthood; that they elevated the authority of Jesus and the apostles, the founder of the priesthood, above the priesthood itself, the master above the disciples. For this reason, it is impossible to rob them of the legitimacy of their consecration before God and Christ. But if they whom you call heretics, had lost the

authority of perpetuating sacerdotal consecration, then you would render doubtful the rights of the Romish clergy themselves. For from the first to the tenth century, it was the clergy among whom very frequently, and for a long time the so called heresy reigned. In the middle of the fourth century the half of the christian clergy were Arians.

**BERNHARD.**—I just remember, that the bishops Dyonysius of Mailand, and Eusebius of Vercelli were Arians, and that the Romish deputies to the council of Arles (in 354,) themselves subscribed the condemnation of Athanasius, whose doctrine subsequently prevailed over that of Arius.

**FATHER.**—If then these avowed heretical bishops continued to consecrate without afterwards re-ordinating those consecrated by them, and if consecration was further extended by these, then a great proportion of the present Romish priests received their consecration from Arians and other heretics, and consequently are not lawfully consecrated.

**HENRY.**—I feel that my ground is untenable. But just now the principal point occurs to me. The consecration of priests can only be performed by a bishop, consequently, Luther, Zwingli and other Catholic clergymen, who were not bishops, could not transplant it into the Evangelical church.

**FATHER.**—You will only get into greater difficulties by that, my son. How do you know, that a bishop only can consecrate?

**HENRY.**—It seems to have been the custom from the beginning.

**FATHER.**—But custom does not create a necessity. Besides it was not so at the beginning, but a custom introduced at a later day. The apostle Matthias, (Acts i. 15—26,) was not elected in the place of Judas the traitor by Peter and the apostles, but by the congregation at Jerusalem, which also (vr. 24,) prayed over him. Paul and Barnabas were consecrated apostles to the heathen, not by an apostle, neither by a bishop, but according to Acts xiii. 1—

3, by three pious private persons at Antioch. If then only a bishop could legally consecrate, Paul, Matthias and Barnabas were not lawfully consecrated, consequently the elders ordained (Acts xiv. 23,) by Paul and Barnabas, and all those consecrated by these again, which certainly constitute a great portion of the Romish clergy, have not received lawful consecration. Besides there is no reason why a bishop only should consecrate, since by consecration, agreeably to your opinion, every one receives the same supernatural gifts, consequently can also communicate them, if they are at all communicable. Then you must grant, that our clergy are validly consecrated, or acknowledge, that the Romish priests are destitute of it also. But I attach no importance to it, because the whole doctrine of the power of consecration and the transmission of a supernatural gift, which renders the priestly order infallible and makes them the spiritual tutors of the laity, is altogether groundless. For by what means do you believe these supernatural gifts are transmitted?

HENRY.—By the laying on of hands at ordination, by which the Holy Ghost is communicated to the priests, and they receive the authority of teaching infallibly, effectually administering the sacraments and offering to God the sacrifice of the mass.

FATHER.—And what authorizes you to ascribe such operation to the laying on of hands?

HENRY.—The scriptures themselves impute it.

MOTHER.—In that you are mistaken, my son. The laying on of hands was not first introduced in the time of Christ, but it was a very ancient Jewish custom, and was a sign of the conferring of something invisible. That which was conferred may have as well been something good as bad, something spiritual or temporal. Hands were laid on the animal that was sacrificed, as a sign that the guilt of sin was laid upon it, and that it must expiate this guilt; (Lev. i. 4, iii. 2, iv. 15, xvi. 21,) on blasphemers, to show that the guilt was theirs, and that they deserved the punishment,

(Lev. xxiv. 14,) on Levites, as a sign that the care of the temple and the holy things were committed to them, (Num. viii. 10,) upon Joshua, to show that the dignity of a leader of the nation was conferred on him. (Num. xxvii. 18—23, Deut. xxxiv. 9.) In the New Testament you find that Jesus laid his hands on children when he blessed them, (Matt. xix. 13—15,) that the same was done to the sick to heal them, (Mark v. 23, vi. 5, vii. 32, viii. 23, xvi. 18. Acts ix. 12, xxviii. 8,) and that hands were laid on newly converted christians to bless them and impart the gifts of the spirit. (Acts xix. 6.) When then it was practised at the admission or installation of elders and deacons (Acts vi. 6, 1 Tim. iv. 14, 2 Tim. i. 6,) it was nothing peculiar, but something common, and they received thereby no extraordinary gifts, but the gifts of the spirit, which *all other christians also* received by the laying on of hands, and these gifts were so little connected with this custom, that even the yet unbaptized heathen received them after the mere hearing of the sermon of the apostle Peter without the laying on of hands. Acts x. 44—46.

**HENRY.**—I never before knew that the laying on of hands was so common, and that it equally exerts an influence on the laity. From this it certainly follows, that this custom is not essential in the consecration of priests, and cannot be the means of communicating gifts peculiar to the priestly order.

**FATHER.**—You will be yet more deeply convinced of this, if you remember, that the apostle Matthias, according to Acts i. 24—26, was consecrated without the laying on of hands by mere prayer, and Jesus himself when he commissioned his apostles observed another custom. He said to them, (John xx. 21) “As my father has sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, *he breathed on them*, and saith unto them, *receive ye the Holy Ghost*. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

By laying on of hands, then, Jesus did not consecrate the apostles. Consequently it cannot be essential or necessary to consecration, or the apostles were not properly consecrated, and of course the whole Romish clergy. Priestly consecration can then communicate nothing, but external authority, to perform ecclesiastical services. But the *internal* consecration which qualifies for this office, cannot be inherited like a piece of land or a lordly title, and it cannot be received by the laying on of the hands of men; for it consists in the religious spirit and gifts necessary for the performance of the official duties.

HENRY.—According to that, the priesthood would have no supernatural gift, which it appropriates to itself as a peculiar possession, in which the laity have no part?

FATHER.—What foolish questions you can ask! If you want another proof, only look at the bishops, the elders, and the deacons, from the first to the sixteenth century. They were seldom unanimous in religious opinions; the priestly order was the most fruitful source of opinions, which another portion of this order declared as heresies. The Phocians, Sabellians, Nestorians, Arians, Novatians, Adoptians, Eutychians, and many others whom you designate as heretics, had priests as their founders, and priests as their defenders. The Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits, all consecrated priests, carried on among themselves the most scandalous and prolix theological controversies, which in part are not yet discontinued. And these priests, of whom one part was always contending against the other, who condemned each other as heretics, are to be infallible, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, and to have the right of determining in an infallible manner, what all christians are to believe or not to believe? And these priests who themselves first introduced the opinion of their presumed privileges, and made it an article of faith, we are to believe upon their bare assertion, when they themselves so grossly contradict the opinion by their actions!

HENRY.—I see very well that I cannot dispute the legitimacy of the consecration of the evangelical clergy on the grounds stated.

BERNHARD.—That does not yet settle the matter, dear Henry. We have granted your conception of the priesthood, and only showed, that the evangelical clergymen had all the right of appropriating to themselves, what the Romish church ascribes to the priesthood. But we could have cut the matter short, and said, that Jesus and the apostles did not design to establish a priesthood in the christian church.

HENRY.—You can scarcely be serious.

BERNHARD.—Perfectly serious. *Teachers* of the gospel, and *overseers* of the congregations they appointed, but no *priests*. For what is a priest?

HENRY.—The Romish catechism says: “*the office of a priest is, to offer sacrifice to God and to administer the sacraments.*” The correctness of this definition is derived from the Old Testament.

BERNHARD.—From the old truly, but not from the new. We have already showed you, that the New Testament declares all sacrifices as abolished by the death of Christ.—There is then no sacrifice to be repeated, and consequently in the New Testament, no priest who has a sacrifice to bring. Besides, the apostles never regarded themselves as priests.

HENRY.—That I grant, but the administration of the sacraments is surely exclusively committed to them.

BERNHARD.—No, no, only read the 11th and 12th chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians! There you will see that the gifts of the spirit were common to all christians, that every one, the women alone excepted, could rise and teach in the congregation and explain the scriptures. Teaching then was confined to no order, but it was free for all, who felt themselves moved to it. And there is not the least proof, that baptizing and administering the Lord's supper was exclusively committed to the apostles, bishops, or elders. Paul says, (1 Cor. i. 14—16,) that in the large

congregation at Corinth, which he established, he had baptized only two persons and one family, and adds, what is very decisive, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

HENRY.—I cannot surely dispute the assertions of the apostle Paul. But the apostles expressly received the power to forgive and retain sins, and through them the bishops received it?

FATHER.—Remember what we said on that subject before, which you could not refute.

HENRY.—The matter was thus represented to me, dear father; the principal design of Christ is, to be the *mediator* between God and men. After his ascension to God, intercession for his people is alone ascribed to him. Whence then shall mediation between God and men come after this time? How are we placed in a situation to fulfil the conditions, under which the mediation is to be of benefit to us? If it was not the will of Christ to continue his mediation personally to the end of the world, and the scriptures speak only of one part of his personal mediatorial office, which he continues after his ascension to heaven, it is easy to believe, that he committed to others the other part of his mediatorial office, that which is visible to men on earth. And this mediatorial office in all its parts continued by Christ on earth, although not personally, is the Catholic priesthood. It is Christ acting and living on earth until the end, in substitutes furnished with his authority and the necessary grace.

FATHER.—All that is pure nonsense, it has no support from the scriptures, yea, it is contradictory to the scriptures. Show me but one passage in which the Saviour says, that the apostles should be his substitutes after his death, and carry on his mediatorial office in his stead. On his departure from the earth the Lord said to his apostles, (Acts. i. 8.) "Ye shall be witnesses unto me," but not, ye shall be *mediators* in my stead, my substitutes in the mediatorial office. And according to Matthew xxviii. 18, 20, the Saviour just

before his ascension said, "All power is given unto me in heaven *and on earth*. I am with you *always*, even *unto the end of the world*." How foolish then for you to syeak, as though Christ could or would not any longer exercise power on earth, and for this reason appointed priests in his stead? The apostle Paul contradicts that notion most decisively, when in Heb. ch. vii. he ascribes to Christ an *eternal priesthood*, that is forever in exercise, continually in operation, and hence draws the conclusion, that there is no more necessity for a priesthood to perform its functions through men as his substitutes. In ch. ix. 10, &c. he says, that the human priesthood was only necessary until the appearance of Christ, "the time of the reformation" he offered himself *once for all*, "*having obtained eternal redemption for us*," (v. 12.) and that now there is no more occasion for continual sacrifice. (v. 25, 28.) So my son, we need no further sacrifice and no priest; and Christ is not, as they wished to persuade you, separated from his church. Your idea of "the priesthood's substitution in the place of Christ on earth" is an idle whim, directly in opposition to the scriptures.

HENRY.—Then there would be no priesthood in the christian church?

BERNHARD.—It was not the design of Christ that there should be a priesthood in the sense of the Romish church. The bishops and elders of the apostolical church did not constitute a distinct and privileged order, but they were partly teachers, partly overseers of the congregations and stewards of the public affairs of the church. Hence every one could be a bishop, if he was qualified for transacting this business. The deacons of the apostolic church were nothing more than stewards of the public alms, and took care of the poor (Acts. vi. 1, &c.) and not even clergymen in the sense of our church. Hence there were also deaconesses, (1 Tim. iv. 9, &c.) which affords certain proof that there was nothing sacerdotal in their office. The bishops, elders and deacons first began gradually to be regarded as a distinct exclusive order in the third and fourth centuries. All that

was peculiar to the Mosaic priesthood was attributed to them, and hence the idea of the priesthood first originated. According to the representation of the apostle *all christians are priests*, and Peter says (1 Ep. ii. 5, 9.) "Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy *priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation."

But by 'spiritual sacrifices' the mass is not understood, but according to Rom. xiii. 1, 2, Heb. xii. 14, 16, the laying off of sin, and the putting on of christian virtue. But when Peter says, all christians are priests, he is rather to be believed, than when the pretended successor of Peter asserts the contrary.\* Hence the Evangelical ministry is fully authorized to perform its functions *by the appointment of the church*, and very properly leaves the forgiveness of sins and the opening of Paradise, to him whom it becomes, the most high in heaven, and does not presume to repeat the sacrifice of Christ to God, since Christ offered himself once for all.

**HENRY.**—I can say nothing against that; but yet there is something consoling in the belief, that the clergy provide for the forgiveness of our sins, for our salvation and the genuineness of our faith!

**FATHER.**—Yes, just as the eulogists of slavery say: it is certainly very consoling to slaves that they need not be solicitous about shelter, food and clothing, inasmuch as the master must provide all these. But they do not thereby reflect, that the slave has nothing of his own, that he must yield unconditional obedience, must bear with all the whims of his master, and endure all the stripes of his overseer without a murmur. And these stripes the Romish priests have laid right lustily over the shoulders of the laity. But all that might be endured, if the clergy were able to fulfil what they promise, and on which account they demand such unlimited power over the souls of the laity.

\*See Appendix, No. XI.

The master gives his slaves real shelter, food and clothing, because he is their master; but the priests only give directions towards Paradise, which is not their own, but God's, they promise forgiveness of sins, which does not depend on them but on the mercy of God, that is, their blessings are all prospective. They themselves possess them not, and only expect them from the grace of the great master above. And how can you believe, that these men are under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and filled with wisdom and holiness, when you read the complaints of all ages against the pride, cruelty, licentiousness and crimes of popes and priests? I do not deny that there have been very many pious, venerable, and excellent bishops, priests and popes; but it is equally undeniable, that there have been many others, who were wicked, licentious, ignorant, lewd and despicable. There is then among them the same mixture of wisdom and folly, virtue and vice, which is observed among the laity; consequently the priests can possess no spiritual gifts above the laity, but are equally subject to error and to sin.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE ROMISH AND EVANGELICAL WORSHIP—THE MASS.

The next morning after this conversation, Henry again read over the paper which he had prepared in Frankfurt, for the purpose of seeing what yet remained that he could advance in justification of his conversion to the Romish church. He found only two things, first, that the Catholic worship was preferable to the Evangelical, and secondly, that the Catholic church receives especial dignity from the saints and martyrs, which belong to her. Difficulties oe-

curred to him on both these points, but still he determined to bring them forward, to hear the opinions of his friends, that there might be a perfect understanding between them on all the points involved in the controversy. Hence on the next evening he introduced the subject of the Catholic worship, to which he ascribed two principal advantages over the Evangelical, first, that it is much richer in festivals, and hence awakens and promotes more ardent devotion; and secondly, that it addresses the senses more powerfully, and by its splendor and ceremonies presents a more tangible and effective view of invisible things, and brings them nearer to our feelings. But he soon had occasion to wish, that he had been silent about the multitude of festivals in the Catholic church, for his friends framed a strong argument against the Romish church from that very circumstance. The festivals have been multiplied to such an extent, they said, that they seriously interfered with the business of the citizens and retarded public industry, so that the Catholic princes themselves were obliged to remedy this abuse, and to prevent the introduction of new church festivals, except by their permission. The friends of Henry also objected on the ground, that many festivals were founded on things which must be regarded as indubitable historical or religious errors, for instance, the festival of the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary, the commemoration of the chair of St. Peter, the Corpus Christi, of the chains of St. Peter, the ascension of Mary, of All Saints, (those which are in purgatory,) the numerous festivals of saints and martyrs, many of which are founded on very uncertain legends. They opposed him on the ground, that in the Old Testament the law was in full force; "six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work," and that although now the celebration of the seventh day was abrogated, and the first day of the week was selected as the Lord's day, yet that the prescription of six working days was still in full force, and that hence it was opposing the design of God, when men multiply holydays at such a rate, that

finally they have become almost as numerous as the working days.

They consumed more time in discussing the second point, which was, the superior advantages of the Catholic worship on account of the deep impression it made on the senses of men. Henry laid much stress on the salutary influence which the church solemnities in Rome exerted on so many strangers, and which Schiller so eloquently pourtrays in the character of Mortimer in his tragedy of "Mary Stuart." They objected to this, that Rome afforded no criterion of the effect of the Catholic worship generally. "In a city said the father, where the high priest is at the same time a temporal king, and his person, when he publicly appears as a priest, is at the same time surrounded with the temporal majesty of the throne, where the subordinate priests are at the same time officers of the kingdom, and the church solemnities are performed in all the gorgeous magnificence which the unlimited will and wealth of a monarch can bestow upon them—in such a city, the worship will naturally be distinguished by a brilliance which can be found no where else. But the city of Rome with her sumptuous St. Peter's church is not the Catholic world, and the king-priest, the pope, and the sacerdotal court surrounding him are not the Catholic church. We must consider the ceremonies in themselves, and not as they are performed at Rome."

"But altogether irrespective of Rome, replied Henry, yet the customs and service of the Catholic church are of that nature, that they make a much deeper impression than the service of the evangelical church. The latter employ only the understanding, but do not awaken religious sensibility; hence they are only suited to the inhabitants of the cold north, who have no sensibility or taste, and not to the sprightly French, Italians, Spanish, and the inhabitants of the south generally. They require something entertaining, something addressed to the senses, which will excite their imagination and feeling."

FATHER.—I have often heard similar speeches, especially from enemies of the Evangelical church in France, and was always not a little astonished, for one single example completely prostrates this baseless idea, and that is derived from the Mohamedan system. No religion in the world has such meagre ceremonies as the Mohamedan. Their mosques are destitute of all ornament, of all pictures, of every thing that could gratify the senses or intoxicate the mind, and are only decorated with passages from the Koran, their holy writings. Their worship consists in fastings, ablutions and prayers. They are perfectly satisfied with their frugal and dry service, and are complete fanatics in their religion. And yet they live in the warm, yea, hot latitudes of the earth, in comparison with which, Italy, Spain, and France, must be called cold countries. You find them throughout all Asia Minor, in burning Arabia, in India, in Persia, in Egypt, in the interior of Africa, and in the torrid deserts. That stupid prattle then, that the climate of France, Italy and Spain demands that we convert the worship of God into a theatrical exhibition, and that pilgrimages, processions, masses and pictures of Saints and Madonnas are essential, has always been exceedingly abhorrent to me, and is only depreciating those noble nations. The people, it is true, are every where the same, and they take delight in that which pleases the eye and charms the ear. But their imperfection is not our law, but we must elevate them to more refined spiritual enjoyments. That this can be the case in southern countries, you see in the reformed christians of France and Switzerland, whose church service is much more simple than ours, but yet they are zealously evangelical, and in France many of them have been unshaking martyrs of their faith, and steadfastly withstood all temptations to apostacy. And was it necessary to establish another mode of worship for the Hollanders and the English in the colonies, which are situated beneath the burning equator, in West India, in South Africa, East India, and the Indian peninsula, because there a hot sun burns

over their heads, and the cold fogs of their native land do not surround them? But even if it were true, as you say, that the south cannot dispense with its theatrical worship, and that the north only begets men insensible to feeling because employed with the understanding alone, then it would be an expression of the Creator himself, that Romanism was not calculated for the north, and consequently you have no right to condemn and calumniate us. It is nothing but foolish, groundless prattle! If the inhabitant of the south is already a creature of lively sensibility, then his inflammable temperament should not in addition be flattered by religion; he should not be entertained by religious shows, and the extravagancies of his warm blood should not be encouraged by endless ablutions and indulgences. By these means he is only made worse, more volatile, and careless,—he is by the climate already disposed to idleness, and by your endless fasts you only nourish that disposition. You should rather give him a church service which would cool the blood, moderate his fire, and lead him to reflection, and not to fanaticism.

HENRY.—Even if I grant that, dearest father, yet there is still one advantage which we have, of which you are altogether destitute. The Catholic worship represents the invisible things and mysteries of religion in splendid paintings and ceremonies which promote devotion in a great degree.

FATHER.—Bernhard, I leave you to reply to that.

BERNHARD.—Let us see Henry, what you have more than we. We have public preaching and much more frequently than you; the Lord's supper also, and we do not administer it half, as you do, but whole, as Jesus instituted it. We have singing, prayer, and baptism. We also celebrate the principal festivals of the church. We also have, as you, churches, organs, clocks, choirs, the ordination of the clergy, and their solemn installation into office. What you have besides, are processions, and pilgrimages, of which it must be acknowledged, that they cherish devotion in a

very small degree, yea, not at all; you have pictures of Saints, holy water, incense, the baptism of bells;—mere trifles, which are unworthy of notice. The principal thing is the *mass*, and that alone.

**HENRY.**—You are right! it is the mass, which constitutes the grand distinction; that is the principal part of the Catholic worship, which exceeds every thing in importance, even the sermon.

**BERNHARD.**—If we attend to the writers of your church, the mass is the most exalted service that can possibly exist, and awakens devotion more ardently than any thing else imaginable. But let us hear what your mass is, I mean that which the priest alone celebrates, and not the Lord's supper, which we also have. The mass, says the Council of Trent in the 22d session, is an unbloody sacrifice, in which the priest offers to God the same Christ who hung upon the cross, as an atonement for sins and transgressions, even if they be enormous; (*etiam ingentia;*) a sacrifice, which the priest offers not only for the sins of the living, and in the place of punishments and penances, *and for other necessities*, but also for the departed, but yet not wholly purified christians in purgatory. The council not only authorizes public masses, at which the congregation is present, but also authorizes, yea, commands private masses, which the priest may hold in a retired chapel, and enjoins that the mass shall be celebrated in the Latin language. Is it not so?

**HENRY.**—Even so.

**BERNHARD.**—The principal idea, then, which lies at the bottom of the whole affair is this, that the priest, in performing the service of the mass, offers the body of Christ, as a sacrifice to God anew. The fact that the sacrifice of the mass is the principal feature in the Catholic worship, should afford you a complete development of the whole character of the Romish church, of her service and of her fundamental difference from the Evangelical church. The character of the Romish church is *priestly*. From the fourth century onward, the christian bishops were regarded as

counterparts of the Old Testament priesthood; they were believed to correspond in all respects; they were no longer considered what the apostles had been, and what it was the wish of the apostles they should be, namely, teachers, examples and overseers of the church, but as mediators between God and men, who sacrifice to God for men, and who thus procure for them grace and pardon from God. So soon as this view became prevalent, so soon was there attributed to all the services of the bishops and other clergy, a priestly, that is, a propitiatory influence with God, which was productive of grace. Their services in baptism, confirmation, the solemnization of matrimony, and the like, produced, as christians believed, that effect on the supernatural world. And this is the principal distinction between the Evangelical and Catholic worship, that we do not ascribe to our worship any supernatural effect on God, but only a moral effect on men, and we arrange and conduct it accordingly. Our worship is intended to enlighten the understanding, to incline the will to the practice of christian virtue, and to purify and sanctify the feelings. Hence the preaching of the divine word, in connection with singing and prayer, is with us the principal matter. The Catholic worship, as a sacerdotal one, is intended to operate on the invisible world, on God, and to move him to absolve you from punishment, and to exercise grace towards you. Hence preaching is with you a subordinate service; at every time of worship there is required a sacrifice, and this is performed in the priest's celebrating the Lord's Supper for himself, and thus a continual sacrifice is offered to God.

HENRY.—But is there not something consoling in this continual sacrifice, that amid our daily infirmities, the grace which we so much need is daily operating?

BERNHARD.—This sacrifice of the mass which is always to be had for money, may certainly be very consoling to him, who desires constantly to sin. He will not be apt to let his sins become very old. They will always be young

and blooming. For as the church father Arnobrius, (Adv. Gentes, XII. p. 128,) correctly says, "The multitude of sins will only be increased, if the hope of absolution is held out, and men will willingly submit to penances, when the grace of the pardoning power can be purchased." But this consolation of the mass is not only dangerous to morality, but it is entirely without foundation. What idea must men entertain of God and of his grace, if they can believe, that so often as the priest sacrifices, God is compelled to be gracious to the sinner, and to change his mind respecting him? For such a compulsion is inseparable from the idea of the sacrifice and its effect on God, because, if God were voluntarily gracious, there would be no necessity of the sacrifice of the mass by the priest. But besides, this whole view of the mass has not the least foundation in the scriptures. I challenge you to show me a single passage in the New Testament, in which the Lord's Supper even in the general, is represented as a sacrifice offered to God. For I will not even ask you for the proof that a *priest* is to offer it. You will not attempt to prove that. In the whole New Testament, although reconciliation through the death of Christ is often spoken of, you will not find *one* passage, in which it is even remotely intimated, that the sacrifice offered by Christ of himself, was or is to be repeated among christians. On the other hand, the whole epistle to the Hebrews expressly contradicts that sentiment, for it is the object of that epistle to show, that by the sacrifice of Christ, which he *once* offered, *all* sacrifices among christians are rendered unnecessary. To quote only a few passages from that epistle, will be sufficient.

Heb. vii. 27. Christ needeth not daily as those high priests (of the Old Testament) to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's, *for this he did once*, when he offered up himself. Ch. ix. 12. The high priest Christ "by his own blood, entered in *once* into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Ch. ix. 25—28. "Nor yet that he should offer himself *often*, as

the high priest entered into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once, in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men *once* to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was *once offered* to bear the sins of many." Ch. x. 10. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all.* (Verse 14.) For by *one offering,* *he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.* (Verse 18.) Now where remission of these (sins) is, there is no more offering for sin."

Can any thing be plainer than these passages? Is not the repetition of the sacrifice of Christ in every form, here declared untenable and perfectly superfluous? And where in the first epistle to the Corinthians, which treats so extensively of the Lord's Supper, does the apostle Paul express the opinion even remotely, that the sacrament is a second sacrifice, that the priest shall partake of it for himself only, and that thereby the priest sacrifices Christ anew?

HENRY.—I acknowledge that a second sacrifice is nowhere spoken of in the New Testament.

BERNHARD.—Say rather, that the second sacrifice is distinctly represented as unnecessary. From all this, then, it is evident that the fundamental doctrine of your church respecting the mass is an error, unfounded in the scriptures, and consequently every thing that your church teaches of the efficacy of the mass, particularly the private and soul masses, is fundamentally erroneous. But this is not the only thing erroneous, that lies at the foundation of your mass. The second error equally great, upon which the whole rests, is this, that bread and wine are changed by the consecration of the priest into the body and blood of the God-man, with which at the same time, (as the Council of Trent, session 13th says,) *the soul and divinity of Christ are present,* (*verum domini nostri corpus, verumque ejus sanguinem cum ipsius anima et divinitate existere.*) But this

change is not supported by a single word of the scriptures. And the whole matter is in itself a palpable contradiction.

HENRY.—I know what you are after. You think, we teach that the bread in the Lord's Supper is bread, and not bread at the same time; that would certainly be contradictory. But the church teaches, that the *substance* of the bread is changed into the body of Christ, but that the *form* and the external appearance of the bread and wine remain unchanged.

BERNHARD.—I did not believe, that you—pardon me! would betake yourself to such a groundless subterfuge. Tell me, what is the difference between the substantial and the accidental in the bread? If the bread still smells like bread, tastes, nourishes, and is, and has every thing like real bread, what is then that *substance*, that can fall away and be displaced by the body of Christ?

Henry continued silent, unable to reply.

BERNHARD.—How can you suffer yourself to be deceived by such miserable subtleties? This whole doctrine of transubstantiation, as history tells us, first originated in the ninth century only from *Paschasius Radbertus*; it was at that time violently assailed by the most distinguished divines, such as *Maurus*, *John Erigena* and *Ratramnus*, and was only first ratified in 1063, at a council held at Rouen. The belief that the host is the body of God, and is offered to God as a renewed sacrifice is founded on that doctrine. I will not even mention the contradiction that arises from the fact, that the priest himself consumes the host, and hence appears to offer the sacrifice not to God, but to himself, which militates against all the customs of the Old Testament, in which that which was to be offered to God, was either sprinkled towards the altar or burned, but never consumed by the priest, although the priest received a portion of the offering. With this there are connected many other errors, for instance, that of purgatory in masses for souls; of other masses, you believe that they can serve all the various wants of life, and hence, you can have a mass

read for good weather, for a safe journey, for the thriving of cattle, and for other things, to which surely the exalted sacrifice of Christ, never had any reference. If then the fundamental ideas of the mass are errors, it is very clear, that it cannot excite a salutary devotion, unless the believer becomes an unbeliever, and entertains very different opinions of the mass, and by his own devotion attributes to it a different efficacy. But all ceremonies which exhibit an error, and which men conscious of that error, must interpret to themselves in a sense totally different from that designed, in order to excite devotion, are false, useless, and superstitious, and dare not find a place in the worship of christians. For a ceremony is the picture of a thought held up to the senses, and must hence be conformed and suited to that thought, just as a garment to the body. It only receives dignity from the thought of the truth on which it is founded, and thus impresses the mind; independent of that it is empty and injurious.

HENRY.—I feel the truth of what you say. I myself have often at the mass thought of something else for my edification. I regarded it as a representation of the omnipresence of God.

BERNHARD.—The sensation of the greatness and glory of God will be more powerful in your soul, if you contemplate the starry heavens with the worlds revolving in eternal silence, than a vaulted church with the priest at the altar.—And did you not miss our admirable hymns in the Romish church?

HENRY.—Indeed I cannot deny, that the Evangelical church singing, in the matter and form of the hymns, exceeds every thing that we have in that part of our service, and that it is peculiarly calculated to excite devotion. I will acknowledge to you, that that old hymn, “Commit thy ways to God,” &c. and that beautiful one of Gellert, “My days on earth are ending,” still afforded me the most heartfelt edification even in Rome.

BERNHARD.—Neither dare you forget the influence of our preaching. We have indeed an infinite advantage over you, that instead of the mass we have made preaching the principal part of the service. And thus pulpit eloquence with us is elevated to a height, which has produced the most excellent results in the extension of knowledge and religion. Our preachers have become models to Catholic Germany, and one single sermon of Reinhard, Draeseke and a hundred others, affords more solid religious nourishment than the most solemn mass with its eternal sameness. Tell me, what kind of sermons did you hear in Italy, which edified and made you a better man?

HENRY.—Here I must grant you every thing, my dear friends; for it is too true, that the sermons which I heard in Italy were not only not edifying to my ear, accustomed to better sermons, but were often in the highest degree offensive. In Catholic Germany it is different; but I myself believe that it is owing to the proximity and influence of the Evangelical preachers, that the Catholic preachers are better here than in Italy.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### ANTONIO AND PURGATORY.

“Sir,—said Antonio the next morning with a lively countenance to Henry,—I have got rid of a great fear, which has hitherto often tormented me, and I feel as if I was born anew, free as a bird in the air.

HENRY.—(Smiling,) It is no doubt something again that you have found in your New Testament, that puts you into such high spirits.

**ANTONIO.**—And is there any thing wrong in that, dear sir? Is not this book given to us that we should search it? O I bless the hour it came into my hands! It has made day out of the night which surrounded me, and instead of the chains which fettered me to the earth and the mercy of the priests, it has given me wings which raise me to God, who is also my father, to whom I am not, as to the priest a mean servant; He permits me to experience his grace, and no man is able to separate me from him.

**HENRY.**—Well, what is it that you have found?

**ANTONIO.**—That there is *no purgatory* in which my soul is once to be tormented!

**HENRY.**—What is your idea of purgatory? surely a gross and vulgar one, as though it were a kitchen fire in which the soul will experience all the pains, which you feel when you burn yourself. But many good Catholics have a more refined idea of it. Their opinion of it is, that the soul will be purified of all the dross of sin, and they leave it undetermined, how it is to occur. For the holy council of Trent has certainly established the doctrine of purgatory, but did not determine what representation men should make of it to themselves.

**ANTONIO.**—That is a mere subterfuge, dear sir. The holy council could have had no other conception of it, than that which has been general among men until now; their idea was, that it was real fire, and hence the council says, that souls will be “tortured” by it. Your so called refined idea is nothing but a subterfuge, by which men seek to avoid the offensiveness of a doctrine, the falsehood of which is too evident. If the condition is one of *torture*, and if men for mercy’s sake are bound to have a multitude of soul masses read, to deliver the soul from this torment, we must believe that it is real fire, or some other condition of indescribable agony.

**HENRY.**—You are right; the church believes that it is such a state of agony.

**ANTONIO.**—But is not the expectation of a purgatory, in which pious souls are to be tormented after death something frightful, that will not only embitter the dying hour of a good christian, but fill him with alarm during his whole life? And what a terrible thought, when a friend of ours, a husband or wife, a father or mother dies, that we must believe notwithstanding all their piety, that they are in awful torment, the very idea of which fills us with horror!

**HENRY.**—But Antonio, you certainly know that the church has the means of delivering souls out of purgatory, namely, the masses for souls.

**ANTONIO.**—Certainly! After the church has first made us fear and tremble, then she offers us help. It really appears as if men were frightened for the express purpose of consoling them, and as if purgatory were invented for the masses, and not the masses for purgatory! And how can such a poor fellow as I am be benefitted by these masses, for they cost money? The church does not make it an easy matter to get out of purgatory; for *one* mass is not sufficient; for the rich, who can pay for many masses, many are read, and for princes they are read by thousands. If *one* mass were sufficient to get a soul out of purgatory, it would be sinful extravagance to suffer the body of God to be sacrificed by the priest a hundred, yea, a thousand times, for a thing already accomplished by the first mass. If then many masses are used, I do not exactly know how many, in order to escape the tortures of purgatory; then you see plainly, that the consolation of the church is consolation only for the rich and exalted, who can pay for many masses, but not for the poor, who must serve out their time in purgatory. “The gospel is preached to the poor,” says the Saviour, when he (Matt. ix. 5.) replied to the messengers of John the Baptist. But purgatory is no gospel or good news,—for the poor it is tidings of horror. But the whole New Testament contains not a single word about purgatory.

HENRY.—You do not perhaps know, Antonio, that the passage 1 Cor. iii. 13, 15, is generally quoted in its favor.

ANTONIO.—I know that very well; but only read for yourself the passage, ver. 9—19 in connection, and the purgatory of souls will immediately be extinguished. Paul warns the Corinthians against creating parties, and following one distinguished teacher rather than another. All the teachers he says, by their teaching helped to build the temple of God, that is, the christian community; but what their materials were, whether stone, or wood, or hay, the fire of trouble and persecution would prove and decide. Then the building constructed of wood and straw will be destroyed by fire, and the master builder, that is the teacher himself, if he is saved, it will only be by fire, that is, certainly not without great damage to himself. The words do not refer to souls after death, but to the church on earth in times of persecution. The fire represents severe trials, but is by no means intended as real fire; for the building is also figuratively spoken of the christian community, and stone, wood, and hay, which are to endure the fire, are figuratively spoken of good and bad doctrines, of truth and error. It would be foolish, if in this whole simile you were to interpret the expression *fire*, literally, but the others, temple, stone, wood, hay, figuratively.

HENRY.—Certainly that passage proves nothing, and I myself never used it as such; but you have found nothing, I suppose, that directly disproves the existence of purgatory.

ANTONIO.—Most certainly have I found enough, and it is just that which to my joy has delivered me from such great fear. It is already enough for me, that Jesus and the apostles, who so often and extensively spoke of a future state, said not a word about a purgatory; for they could not have been silent about it altogether. But they speak in a manner, which shows that there can be no purgatory for pious souls. Of poor Lazarus, Jesus says, (Luke xvi. 22.) “And it came to pass, that the beggar died and was carried

by angels into Abraham's bosom;" therefore not into purgatory. To the thief on the cross he cried out (Luke xxiii. 43.) "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise," and this man was a robber, whose soul certainly was less purified than that of a pious man. On this I trust, and hence I have abandoned all faith in purgatory and am free from all fear. What could I think of the mercy of God? Can I praise the mercy of a father, who still suffers me to be tormented by a horrible fire and as it were burnt out, although his son sacrificed his life for me that he might forgive me, and the priest has unceasingly repeated this sacrifice in the mass for me, although I tried my utmost to fulfil his commandments! And, sir, how can you conceive at all of the whole affair, without making the soul something corporeal? The whole idea is certainly taken from metals, which are melted and purified by fire. The soul surely cannot be any thing as coarse as a piece of metal, which is burnt out in the fire!!

HENRY.—Such a vulgar idea of it cannot certainly be entertained, although that is the idea of the church.

ANTONIO.—I believe that it *cannot at all* be understood,—that men can have *no conception* of it. I come to this conclusion from the manner in which I was purified of the dross of sin, which I brought with me from Italy by this blessed book, (*holding up the New Testament.*) There was no fire and no torture, although there was sorrow. I was brought to see the truth; I learned to love it; I resolved to practise it; I do practice it to the best of my ability; this is the history of my purification, and no man can be purified in any other way. Sorrow purifies him, as it did the prodigal son, whose father did not first let him go through a purgatory before he received him, but immediately prepared for him a feast of joy. Of this sorrow Paul says, (2 Cor. vii. 10.) "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of;" "to salvation," observe, not *to purgatory*. "He that is dead (says the same apostle, Rom. vi. 7.) is freed from sin."

HENRY.—O Antonio, your soul is full of light! You are a happy man.

ANTONIO.—That I feel, and thank God. But I owe it altogether to the gospel, to which alone I will hereafter cling. I have experienced to my salvation the fulfilment of what the Saviour says, “Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.”

HENRY.—In God’s name cleave to it, Antonio. I at least will not lead you in any other way than that in which you yourself walk, conducted by the gospel.

ANTONIO.—That would also be in vain!—how blind I was that I wondered so much, when we first entered the evangelical countries, that presumed heretics were also prosperous, and that they were industrious, honest, and moral. I see plainly that the gospel daily exerts on them the same influence that it has on me; it makes them better and more contented men, and with such a people our heavenly father will be pleased.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE SAINTS AND MARTYRS.

Henry did not end this conversation with his servant without some feeling of shame. Antonio, by the simple guidance of the gospel, had delivered himself from gross errors which his education had engrailed on him. This fact filled Henry with shame, inasmuch as he had suffered himself to be seduced from the evangelical truth into these gross errors. He became more and more sensible of the precipitancy with which he had acted; his regret became more painful, and he would have given much, if he could have recalled all that he had said and done. The thought of returning to the Evangelical church, occurred to him

frequently. But the sensation of shame always suppressed it, inasmuch as such a step would appear to exhibit him to the world as changeable and fickle, or as a weak headed youth who easily suffered himself to be outwitted. The customary expedient of quieting his mind in this painful state of uncertainty, was the consolation that as a Catholic, he might be a good christian, and yet think of the doctrines as he pleased. The next evening he for the first time communicated to his friends the change which the reading of the scriptures had occasioned in Antonio's mind. The family had been not altogether ignorant of the fact, but still did not believe that Antonio had proceeded so far. Henry confessed, that he could not withstand in the least degree Antonio's scripture proofs, and that this morning he had so clearly demonstrated the non-existence of a purgatory, that he himself no longer believed it.

**BERNHARD.**—I only wonder, dear Henry, that you ever have believed it, as it so evidently is a remnant of paganism. The whole idea originated from the system of Zoroaster, who lived before Christ in Media. He was a worshipper of fire, and taught, as his works still extant show, that at the end of time the whole world must go through a stream of fire, by which it will be purified and glorified in light. From him also the platonic philosophers among the Greeks took the idea of a purification after death. From these sources the opinion was also received by several church fathers, as Origen and Augustin. But both seem to have regarded it rather as a figure of moral reformation. It was by no means a doctrine of faith at that time. It became such only through the Roman bishop Gregory, in the sixth century, and then was gradually extended through the church. But the fear of purgatory, from which the priest alone could redeem, was too useful to the priesthood, and the masses for the dead founded upon it, were too profitable to them, that they should permit this opinion to be abolished, when it was once prevalent. The council of Trent established it as an eternal article of faith in the Romish

church, and thus stamped as a christian doctrine, a thing that in its origin was as foreign to christianity, as the invocation and worship of angels, saints and martyrs.

HENRY.—What? You declare this invocation and worship to be foreign to christianity? I see an advantage of the Catholic church in that very thing, that she has so large a number of saints and martyrs who are her ornament and glory, of which the Evangelical church is wholly destitute. These heroes of faith and humility bear strong testimony to the truth of Catholic christianity, and their example is a powerful stimulus to the faithful.

FATHER.—As far as I am acquainted with the legends of your pretended saints, we have no reason to envy you that advantage. But even granting, that the saints of your church were real saints, yet your glory on their account amounts to nothing. For as your church was first founded only in the 11th century, the apostles, saints and martyrs of the first thousand years, are not yours exclusively, but are common to the whole church, and hence belong also to us. But to worship them and the angels, to consecrate churches, altars and festivals to them, to pray to them, to depend upon their intercession with God, all this on the best grounds we regard as wrong. What do your confessions teach on this subject?

HENRY.—The council of Trent in the 25th session says: “The bishops shall teach, that the saints intercede with God for men; that it is good and useful humbly to invoke them, and to take our refuge in their intercessions, *merits* and *assistance* for the attainment of blessings from God through his Son Jesus Christ, who is our only Redeemer.”

The Romish catechism in the third part says; “The *angels* are also to be invoked, partly, because they continually see the face of God, and partly, because they willingly undertake the defence of our salvation. There is evidence in the holy scriptures of this invocation. Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 26.) prayed to the angel who wrestled with him, that he would bless him.” The same catechism in the fourth part,

says, "The holy church with great propriety directs her thankful prayers and invocations to the most holy mother of God, that she may by her *intercessions reconcile us sinners to God*, and obtain for us *temporal* and *eternal* blessings." Hence the Catholic church renders to these intercessors a sort of worship, and permits them to be chosen as protectors of individual men, churches, provinces and countries, and teaches, that men can receive from them protection against every kind of misfortune and the attainment of every kind of blessing.

MOTHER.—I am indeed an unlearned woman, but I think that I could refute the whole episcopal assembly at Trent from the scriptures. For the doctrines of your bishops are so directly at variance with the scriptures, that it is wonderful, how these shepherds of your church could speak so decidedly against all scripture. They say, that we must invoke the saints and Mary, but the Lord says, (Ps. l. 15.) "call upon *me* in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." In Ps. cxlv. 18, it is said: The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him. (ver. 19.) He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; *he will also hear their cry, and will save them.*" Hence it is not necessary that it be first introduced to his notice, and recommended to him by Mary and the saints. Jesus also teaches us to pray to God without such mediators, when (Matt. vi. 9.) he says: "After this manner therefore pray ye; OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN."

HENRY.—But, dear mother, is not intercession for others a general duty? And shall not the saints in heaven, also perform this duty?

MOTHER.—Intercession for others is undoubtedly a duty of love according to 1 Tim. ii. 1, Luke vi. 28, James v. 15. but all the passages of scripture treat only of the intercession of the living for the living, and not of the dead for the living. But this intercession is no where represented as something necessary in order to obtain help from God. The New Testament recognizes only one mediator for us, not

Mary, not the saints, but Jesus Christ. In Rom. viii. 34, it is said, Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. And in 1 John ii. 2, "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." This is also said in Heb. iv. 15, 16, and vii. 24, 25. We do not then need the intercession of saints and angels. "Ask," it is said, "and it shall be given unto you." But it is still less allowable for the christian *to worship* the angels and saints in any manner. In Isaiah xlii. 8, it is said "I am the Lord; that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Jesus commands, Matt. iv. 10, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve." And in Rev. xviii. 10, xxii. 8, 9, we read, that John was about falling down before the angel to worship him, but he declined the honor with these words: "see thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; *worship God.*" Neither did the apostle Peter accept of this honor, and said to Cornelius, as he fell at the apostle's feet, (Acts x. 25.) "stand up, I myself am also a man." You find not a single example of intercession of the dead for the living, or of angels for us in the New Testament. That example of the angel by whom Jacob desired to be blest, which is quoted by the council, is not at all applicable to this case. Thus Esau and Jacob were blessed by Isaac and Ephraim, and Manassah by Jacob. (Gen. xxvii. xlvi.) Can any one on that account say, that they worshipped Isaac or Jacob?—You see then that the scriptures direct us to pray immediately to God, and not to angels or to saints, and they are still farther from allowing them divine honors.

HENRY.—But you are wrong, mother, if you believe that the Catholic church approves of the adoration af angels and saints; that is only paid to God; she only allows a religious veneration of them by invoking them for their intercession and assistance.

MOTHER.—That distinction is nothing more than a mere play on words. It is written in the scriptures "*call on me* in the day of trouble," but not on an angel. *To call on the name of God*, or to *call on God*, is in many places in the scripture equivalent to worshipping God, or praying to him, and if there were yet a difference between praying to God, and worship or invocation, it would certainly be unintelligible to the people, and that would really seduce them into a sort of idolatry.

FATHER.—That is also the offensive feature of the subject to me, that the abuse of regarding the saints and angels as subordinate Gods, can scarcely be avoided. For he who seriously believes that Mary and the saints heard his prayers, must make out of them a sort of omnipresent and omniscient beings. Gregory, for example, is at the same time invoked in Naples, Rome, Piedmont, Sicily, Austria, Bavaria, France, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Chili, Peru, Brazil, St. Domingo and other places. Either he must be, like God, present at all these places, to hear these invocations, or he must like God, be omniscient, to know all these prayers, sighs and silent vows, or he can ascertain nothing of all these, and of course, render no assistance. Particularly is this worthy of observation with respect to Mary, who is worshipped and invoked most generally. It is calculated that there are 125,000,000 of Catholics in the world and 40,000,000 of Greek christians, of whom the majority daily pray "Hail, Mary." They live dispersed over the whole earth. But the blessed spirit of Mary is to hear and present all their prayers to God. Is it not evident, that men must presuppose that Mary is a sort of goddess, hearing all, omniscient, and omnipresent?

HENRY.—Really I never represented the matter to myself in that light, and see plainly, that it militates against all our conceptions of a human soul. But it is still a consoling thought, to believe, that the saints pray to God for us. God is such an exalted being, that we feel ourselves separated from him as it were by a great gulf, which Mary and the saints fill up.

**MOTHER.**—That cannot be your sincere opinion, if so, you must not know God at all. The Psalmist says of him, “*thou understandest my thoughts afar off; lo, there is not a word on my tongue, but thou knowest it altogether.*” Read the whole of the 139th Psalm, and learn from that, how foolish it is to seek for an interpreter of our desires to the omnipresent God, who knows our inmost thoughts before they are distinct to ourselves, and to ask for a sainted intercessor with him, who is our gracious and merciful father. Your worship of the saints tends to alienate the hearts of christians from God; he becomes strange to them; they accustom themselves to think only of men; God appears to them in the unworthy aspect of an eastern king, whom no man can approach, excepting through flattering intercessors and courtiers. Where is that love, that filial confidence which the christian has in God as his father? The Romanist prays more frequently to Mary and the saints than to God. But since you also pray to God I wish to know, why you do not *always* pray to God, but most frequently to the saints? If you believe that he accepts prayer generally, and if consistent with his wisdom, hears it, then you must also believe, that he *always* hears, and feels disposed to answer it. Consequently the intercession of saints is very superfluous, and in truth an insult to God, as though he were first to be reminded of his mercy, and rendered gracious through men.

**HENRY.**—You may not be wrong in that, dear mother, but yet it is not to be denied, that the martyrs and saints deserve to be venerated and praised by us.

**FATHER.**—Yes,—but only as all other pious christians generally, *not as mediators between God and men.* For we have only one mediator, and that is Christ. We may *honor* the heroes of virtue, and the martyrs of the faith. We may cherish their memory and celebrate their courage; but *pray to them* we dare not.

**HENRY.**—But the religious veneration of martyrs and of saints is so ancient in the church, that it can be traced back to the first century.

FATHER.—All that would follow from that is, that the error was ancient; but certainly an error, for it militates against the scriptures most decisively.

BERNHARD.—And besides that, an error, which is indebted for its origin to an opinion, which was to be exploded by christianity. The ancient world before Christ, even the Jews believed, that the souls of *all* men after death went to a subterranean world, that is, a place of abode under the earth, an opinion, which the first church fathers also yet entertained, and which you will find extensively set forth by Tertullian, if you read the 55th and 58th chapters of his book “On the Soul.” To explode this idea was the design of christianity, and hence, it every where promises true believers freedom from death, or from this subterranean abode, and eternal life *in heaven* or *with God*. But the thought, that souls after death leave the earth entirely and go to heaven to God, appeared very singular and difficult to the ancient world, so that for a long time they adhered pertinaciously to the old idea of the subterranean world, and regarded immediate ascension to heaven as something extraordinary,—as a very distinguished reward. This they ascribed, as is seen from the oldest fathers, exclusively to the martyrs. They believed, that the reception of the martyrs into heaven was like that of Christ, because they like Christ, suffered death. Of many passages of the old fathers which I could quote, I will only select the words of Tertullian, (“Of the resurrection,” ch. 43,) who says; “No one who has departed from the body in death (without going into the subterranean world,) can immediately abide with the Lord, unless he suffered martyrdom, in which case he at once goes to paradise and not into the lower worlds.” You can now easily see, how men could come to regard the martyrs as intercessors, namely, because they and they alone, besides the angels, were considered as inhabitants of heaven, who surrounded the throne of God, and consequently (for so humanly did they conceive of this matter,) had the opportunity of praying to God for

the living. The ancient church then had still some ground in a prevailing, though erroneous and anti-christian idea, for regarding the martyrs as intercessors with God ; but there was no ground for extending this at a later day to the so called saints, than at most the desire of substituting in the imagination of the converted heathen, in the place of their gods of which they were deprived, something else, which did not appear to militate against the unity of God. The saints and martyrs were substituted in the place of those demi-gods, or those men, whom the Greeks and Romans regarded as demi-gods, because they were considered not to be in the lower world, but in heaven.

HENRY.—If that be the case with respect to the intercession of saints, it is certainly founded on an erroneous opinion. But, dear Bernhard, why do you call the saints, *so called or pretended* saints? Do you not believe that their virtues are genuine and worthy of imitation?

BERNHARD.—As the evening is far advanced, let us postpone that to another time.

FATHER.—That is also my desire ; for Henry, we have hitherto heard your accusations against our church, and your representation of the advantages which you ascribe to the Romish church. We have defended ourselves against the former, and the latter we have examined by the light of scripture and history. If you have joined the Romish communion from full conviction, you must also consider our arguments against your church, that you may know how to answer us. It will not be much, for in our defence thus far, many principal points have been discussed and decided.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE MORALITY OF THE ROMISH CHURCH—CHRISTIAN PERFECTION—  
INDULGENCE AND GOOD WORKS.

Henry had nothing to object to this request of his father. It was reasonable. They had heard him; he must now also listen to them, for he had nothing more that appeared worthy of bringing forward in his justification. With great reluctance he was obliged to acknowledge to himself, that every thing, by which he hoped triumphantly to justify himself, had vanished into air. True, none of his relations had yet uttered an expression which alluded even to the absolute necessity of his return to the Evangelical church; but he certainly expected such a requisition from the resolute character of his father, and thought with trembling of that agreement which he had entered into with him at their first conversation, respecting the duty of abandoning an erring church. To receive more light on several points, which Bernhard had refuted from the nature and character of the first church, he took up the writings of the apostolic fathers, Justin and Tertullian, and read them with diligence. But they set before him a picture of the ancient church, which was less and less like the present Romish church. These writings, far from affording him any weapons for the defence of his church, on the other hand only sharpened more and more the weapons of his opponents. The state of mind which this occasioned was intolerable. He felt that he must soon come to a decision, and at the same time, that nothing but a return to the truth so precipitately abandoned, could again restore peace and harmony in his soul. So soon as he had once acknowledged this conviction, he became more contented, and hence in the evening he went considerably composed, to hear what his dear friends would advance in opposition to the church of Rome.

"The principal thing which I object to in your church, said the father, is this, that she has corrupted the science of morals, and has attached to a false virtue, which deserves not the name, the character of special holiness. The majority of the saints of the middle and latter ages, received the honor of saints from this false virtue."

HENRY.—That is no doubt also your view of the subject, Bernhard, and hence you yesterday said, "the pretended" saints. Tell me your reasons.

BERNHARD.—On that subject I must necessarily be somewhat lengthy, and I pray you to grant me your attention a little longer than usual. Before the time of Christ, there was an opinion prevalent in the east, that the body was the prison of the soul, and that matter was the origin of evil. This view of the body was not unknown to the philosophy of Plato and Pythagoras, and was also entertained by the hellenistic Jews, as the example of Philo of Alexandria shows; yea, it pervaded all that part of the world where christianity first flourished, and hence was adopted by the first christian teachers. But unfortunately it perverted morality. It was believed, for instance, that the soul could only approximate perfection, or be made an acceptable instrument of the spirit of God, and rendered worthy of union with God, partly, by abstaining from every thing that would be agreeable to the body, and that would excite the natural desires, or gratify the senses, and partly by employing all severe measures to weaken and blunt the natural appetites, to mortify the body, and thus afford the soul a greater liberty in spiritual meditations. Even before the time of Christ, such abstinence or *mortification of the flesh* as it was called, was not uncommon. The moral zeal of the first christians led them to adopt this, and they soon carried it much farther. The natural appetites, which occasioned carnal enjoyments in satisfying them, were now regarded as sinful, and abstinence from this satisfaction of them, as meritorious; the enjoyment of delicate food, matrimony, in fine every sort of luxury, indulgence, or mere carnal gratifica-

tion was considered incompatible with christian perfection ; on the other hand, fasting, the most simple food and drink, severe abstinence from all public amusements and enjoyments, voluntary poverty, celibacy, the voluntary performance of humiliating services, were regarded as particularly meritorious, and especially holy. Hence a second marriage was reprobated as an evidence of great incontinence ; the priests, if they made any pretensions to sanctity, lived with their wives as brother and sister, and many laymen did the same.\* From this was evolved very gradually the doctrine of the Romish church respecting *christian perfection*, or a piety which does more than the moral law enjoins, and which God does not precisely demand, because it is not possible to all men, but which the apostles have still recommended as particularly acceptable to God. This constitutes the "*evangelical counsels*" of the Romish church, and the actions flowing from them, the pretended "*good works*" of that church. This perfection, according to your church, consists in celibacy, voluntary poverty, alms giving, fasting, prayer, blind obedience to priestly superiors, retirement from the world and its business and enjoyments, or monastic life, and every sort of voluntary severe treatment of the body. Those who distinguished themselves in this kind of abstinence and self-mortification received *par excellence* the name of *saints*.† But this pretended virtue was carried to the greatest extent at the time when the innumerable mendicant monks arose, who made a peculiar merit of idleness, of supporting themselves by alms, and of living and wandering about in the most disgusting filthiness.

HENRY.—But will you condemn such voluntary abstinence, which was often founded on deep religious feeling ?

\*See Mosheim. Cent. III. Part II. ch. II. sec. 6.—(Tr.)

†Clemens of Alexandria says on this subject, (Cohort ad Gent. §. 11.) "The counsels, whether a man shall marry, hold an office, and beget children, are contemptible. The general commandments relating to piety are the principal matter; to live in conformity to them is alone necessary in order to attain eternal life."

**BERNHARD.**—I grant that in the case of many it was founded on deep religious feeling; but it was evidently a false sanctity after which they strove. For it proceeded from incorrect views of human nature and the design of human life, and to the greatest prejudice of christianity it cast into the shade the moral law, upon which the welfare of man depends. To live in lawful marriage, faithfully to bear all the burdens of domestic life, to bring up pious children for the state and the church, all this, according to this doctrine of perfection is nothing; but, not to marry, not to lead a domestic life, not to have and educate children, is sanctity. To live among men, to work for them, to be engaged in trade, or any kind of business, to serve the state and to be useful to society, all that is nothing; but to lock up one's self in monasteries, to renounce the world and to be constantly engaged in pious exercises, is sanctity. But why should I expatiate on this subject? I will merely state the grounds on which I must reject this whole doctrine of perfection. That which cannot become general, because if it became general, it would dissolve the constitution of civil life and human society, consequently, frustrate all the designs of the creator with man, and render the extension of the church impossible, is and never can be proper; it is not perfection, but aberration from the truth, and enthusiasm. Against this principle, you can indeed say nothing. But your pretended christian perfection, would unavoidably produce such a dissolution of church and civil society, and hence the whole system is pernicious fanaticism.

**HENRY.**—But the church does not intend that this christian perfection shall become general, because all men have not the spirit necessary for it.

**BERNHARD.**—Then it is not perfection, not sanctity, for according to the directions of Christ and the apostles, every man is commanded to be perfect and holy. That which would be folly and corruption if it became *general*, cannot be virtue, when only a few practise it. It is then something merely allowable, but nothing good. A country filled with merely

holy monks and nuns, instead of industrious fathers and mothers would show very distinctly the complete folly of monkish virtue. And do you expect to reconcile *the blind obedience* which constitutes a part of this perfection, with morality, which must rather obey God than men? Has not this blind obedience in the monastic order been often most shamefully abused, particularly by the Jesuits?

HENRY.—But the church surely did not authorise such abuses.

BERNHARD.—But she should not authorise the principles from which such abuses proceeded.

HENRY.—Has she really approved these principles of christian perfection?

BERNHARD.—Do you yet ask that? Has she not approved them in every monastic order? Has she not founded on them her whole doctrine of penances, which the council of Trent declared as highly necessary? Has she not expressed her approbation of them in the worship of pretended saints? Has she not on them tried to justify the celibacy of the priests? But, my friend, this subject has yet another feature, very serious and very destructive to morality. It is taught, that the saints have by their voluntary good works of christian perfection, done more than God demands of men: they practiced virtue above virtue, or *works of supererogation*, and thus purchased merit before God, of which they do not themselves stand in need. This extra merit, it is further taught, remains in the church, and in these superfluous merits of the saints, the church possesses an inexhaustible treasure, of which the pope in Rome possesses the key. To all those persons, who fail in obedience to the moral law, and instead of merit have the guilt of sin, the pope can supply from that treasure as much merit as they need, to efface their guilt before God; that is, he can grant them *indulgence*, and the written document certifying that he has out of this treasure of merit given them what their necessity required, is — a *bill of indulgence*.

How conveniently a man can procure virtue in your church ! Why need he fulfil the law of morality with diligence and anxiety, and procure for himself any moral merit, since the multitude of saints have heaped up an *inexhaustible* treasure of merit, which he need only permit to be imputed to himself, and with which the church has always been very liberal !

**HENRY.**—Bernhard, I cannot believe that it is so ! This would be a real trade, which would vastly depreciate the value of morality.

**BERNHARD.**—Well then, only hear the papal bull, in which the late year of jubilee and the distribution of indulgences is proclaimed.

“We have resolved to exercise the power which has been given to us from above, to open the fountains of heavenly treasures, which have accrued through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the *blessed virgin* his mother and the *saints*, to dispense which the author of man kind has granted us the power. ~ We grant and vouchsafe *grace in the Lord, forgiveness and complete pardon of all* their sins to christians, who in the time of jubilee confess with true penitence and sorrow, strengthen themselves with the holy communion, and who devoutly visit at least once a day, for thirty days in succession, or periodically, the churches of St. Peter, and of St. John, of Lateran, and St. Mary Massora, and fervently offer prayers to God for the *glory* of the Catholic church, the *extirpation of heresy*, the harmony of *Catholic* princes, the salvation and peace of the christian community.”

Thus you hear whence the pope distributes his gifts; from the treasures not only of the merits of Christ, but also of Mary and the Saints, which the pope, we know not why, represents as heaped up at Rome. You can also receive a portion of them, if you go to Rome and pray for the extirpation of the church of your native land.

**HENRY.**—O Bernhard that was an unkind reflection !

**BERNHARD.**—Pardon me! my remark was really not intended to apply to you, but to the bull of the pope, which demands this from the faithful. I did not mean to wound your feelings, but to show you the monstrous absurdity of the doctrine, and the moral mischief it occasions. But surely you cannot justify this use of the presumed holiness of the saints, for it subverts all the principles of morality, and exhibits virtue, that is, the fulfilment of the moral law, as a matter of small importance, and thus depreciates it very low.

**HENRY.**—Certainly I do not justify that use, but consider it an abuse; but if any one chooses to follow the “evangelical counsels,” as they are called, I cannot blame him for it; the alms giving that is included in it, is certainly very useful, and is a work of christian mercy.

**FATHER.**—That is the only one of your so called good works, that is of any benefit to human society, and it has established among you many excellent charitable institutions. But you will not deny that the other virtues of the saints, as celibacy, fasting, monastic life, prayer daily continued for hours in succession, blind obedience to the clergy, self-mortification and the like, are not of the least benefit to human society, and only draw men away from the commandment, “thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” And I cannot even approve of your alms-giving. With you the merit is not in the giving, and the good you do thereby, but you seek it in the voluntary parting with your money or property. Alms-giving with you is a work of penance, by which you render satisfaction for your sins, as if you pay God for pardon, and yet in it you only do your duty and nothing more. Hence you go and cast money into the poor man’s lap without choice or object, and thus you only make idlers and beggars, in which Italy particularly is so immeasurably rich, that one would believe, that beggary and idleness themselves belonged to christian perfection. With us, the merit does not consist in the sparing of our abundance, but in the *aid* we render. Hence we do

not support the idle, but the weak and those unable to work, and thus what we do, and it is really a vast deal, is not injurious to the public good, but useful.

**BERNHARD.**—Your religious veneration of saints also engendered the *veneration of relics*, which the council of Trent established, and in which, as the whole world knows, so much deception and gross mischief are practiced. This merit of relics, together with the pretended miracles connected with them, only nourishes the superstition of the great mass, but the effect is also this, that with the more enlightened it renders christianity itself and its history suspicious, if not contemptible. I often wonder that intelligent bishops of your church do not feel, that a miracle working relic is nothing more than the miracle working *fetisch*\* of a negro in Africa.

**HENRY.**—I cannot contradict you in that, and neither will I deny that I have often heard sensible Catholics highly disapprove of these things, and volatile ones ridicule and scoff at them most wickedly.

**FATHER.**—But if you acknowledge, my son, that the whole system of saint virtue militates against the spirit of genuine christian virtue, then you see here another proof, that the Romish church has failed in the principal design of christianity, which is to deliver men from the dominion of sin, and lead them into the path of christian virtue. But let this suffice for this evening. When we meet again I will invite your attention to some other things of a similar character.

\*An African idol.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

CONTINUATION—ABSOLUTION FROM OATHS—THE POPES—MARRIAGE  
—BLIND OBEDIENCE—THE GOVERNMENT.

FATHER.—It would not become me, my son, as an evangelical believer, to exalt the christians of my own church above the Romanists in respect to their morals. You have yourself seen Catholic countries, you have seen the seat and cradle of the Catholic church, and you are also acquainted with your native land; judge for yourself. If I am to believe the accounts of travellers; Italy is precisely the country, where domestic and civil virtue flourish least. Now I believe that I am not demanding too much when I say, that in Rome where the pattern and supreme head of christians reside, where the sacred and infallible priesthood reigns not only spiritually but temporally, where all receive the true faith from the fountain head, where the temporal power, which the clergy hold in their pious hands, offers no hindrance to their activity in promoting morality, but every possible means of advancing it; in Rome, where alone sentence is pronounced on the holiness and sinfulness of men, where heretics are condemned, and saints canonized; in Rome, where the vice-gerent of Christ with his apostles, the cardinals, resides as spiritual and temporal monarch; in Rome christian morality must flourish more than in any other place in the christian world, there the whole influence of christianity upon men, must exhibit itself. Roman christians must be patterns for the christian world. Is this so, Henry?—speak.

HENRY.—No, truly, dear father, you will not only not find more christian morality there, but less than at other places.

FATHER.—Then I am fully justified in the conclusion, that genuine christian faith, genuine christian character, in a word genuine christianity is not found there. It is not

to be imputed to the climate, for ancient Rome exhibited many splendid virtues, but it is to be attributed to the fact, that the pope and the clergy with their temporal power and glory have set themselves up in the place of Christ and the christian church, and that the whole design of catholicism is not, to make men virtuous and acceptable to God, but to make them obedient servants of the *priesthood*.— Hence that eternal series of sacerdotal measures, by which men, without ever being really reformed, are always absolved and conducted to heaven. But on this subject I have already spoken at the commencement of our discussions. Hence that praise of the virtues of the saints, which fills monasteries and monkish orders, and enriches the churches and clergy. But of that we spoke last night. This evening I will yet direct your attention to several things which evidently must have an injurious effect on the morality of the Catholic population, and is indeed a serious charge against your church. The first is the cruelty, which she has always exercised against those differing from her in opinion, the persecutions which she has in all ages excited against those, who would not recognize the supreme authority of the priesthood, the monster of the inquisition which was begotten by them, and which the popes nourished and supported, the millions of bloody sacrifices which your priests have occasioned for the maintenance of their dominion, and that everlasting unchristian condemnation and cursing of all evangelical christians.

**HENRY.**—I cannot deny that the popes of the earlier ages did charge themselves and their church with many sins of blood, but I still believe, that now a milder spirit prevails in Rome, and that they no longer practice the barbarities of the dark middle ages.

**FATHER.**—It is a miserable deception, only played off by the proselyters for the purpose of soothing the abhorrence which the cruelties of their church have excited in the minds of men. Did not the former pope Pius VII. solemnly protest against it at the congress of Vienna, that the evangeli-

cal christians in Germany should enjoy the same privileges as the Romanists? Did not the same pope address a circular dated Nov. 30, 1808, to all foreign Catholic courts, in which he said:

"It is as false as *slenderous*, that the concordat (with France in 1801) established the toleration of other worship. This religious treaty contains not a single word, that has reference to any worship *condemned* and *forbidden* by the church of Rome."

But this worship condemned by Rome was that of the Reformed church in France. The same pope in May 1808 wrote to the French clergy: "The indifference (of the French code of laws) which *prefers* no religion (confession) above another, is highly *insulting* to the church of Rome, and is opposed to her spirit, for this church on account of her divinity and necessary unity cannot unite *with any other*." If then the Romish church until this hour condemns us as heretics, does not acknowledge us as a church, and continually protests against our civil existence, you must confess that it is not the *will* that is wanting, but the *power*, to treat us according to the spirit of the middle ages. Does not this continual hatred and unceasing intolerance stand in open contradiction to the spirit of christianity, which commands us to love those who differ from us, yea, even our enemies, and every where enjoins mercy and liberality.

HENRY.—I must confess that, my father, and I myself believe that the world would fare badly with respect to liberty, if the Catholic princes and people would act out the principles of hatred and persecution, which are incessantly preached to them from Rome.

FATHER.—But the clergy of your church have also exerted a very corrupting influence on the morality of their brethren of the faith, *in openly advocating and supporting immoral principles*. I will say nothing of indulgences, for we entertain the same opinion of their pernicious effects. But how often have your popes of ancient and modern days declared the solemn oath of christians invalid, and thus

undermined the sacredness of swearing by oath and reverence for God in the hearts of men? And did they not establish the principle that no faith was to be held with heretics? But all this would have been of comparatively small importance, if only the Romish church had not given birth to the *Jesuits*, received and nurtured them, yea, even now again restored them. The morality of the Jesuits has become proverbial in Europe. They maintained the abominable principle, that the end justifies all, even the worst means, and that hence rebellion, regicide, perjury, falsehood and every thing infamous, was allowable for the glory of God. They established the scandalous doctrine of probability, as they called it, according to which a wicked action was allowed, if only probably a good effect might be expected from it. They taught mental reservation in oaths and promises—taught, that an immoral action is not sinful, if in the execution of it men only thought of God. They, in a word became so impious and dangerous, that the universal complaints of the *Catholic* courts procured the dissolution of the order. According to a calculation made, it was found that sixty-eight Jesuitical writers encouraged and enjoined the crime of regicide.

HENRY.—But the Catholic church did not sanction such abominable doctrines.

FATHER.—No, that she did not do, as the desire for the dissolution of the order shows. But the popes connived at these doctrines; they protected the order against the reigning powers as long as possible; they have again restored it, they cherish and recommend it every where. But what your infallible pope, the inspired head of the inspired priesthood, to which the Jesuits also belong, does, is chargeable upon your whole church, which recognizes him as the general father of all christians. Suppose a prince, who had dismissed a minister of corrupt principles for injustice and fraud, would again restore him to favour, and highly honor him, who would not be forced to believe, that he also sanctions those principles and the practice of them?

HENRY.—It is certainly bad enough to restore an order, which the moral voice of the Catholic world condemned, without disapproving of their former corruptions and false principles universally known, and without giving to the world some security, or only intimating, that it had been reformed.

FATHER.—Generally speaking, the pope cannot be considered distinct from the Romish church, for the Romanists themselves connect him so closely with it, that they will scarcely regard those as christians, who will not submit to him, and all the bishops and clergy of the Catholic world at their ordination must swear “true obedience” to him. Now see, my son, how the popes have always maintained principles which are directly opposed to the gospel, and thus also led Romish christians to disobey the declarations of Christ and the apostles. They have always maintained, and of course, their bishops also, that evangelical christians are damned, because they do not believe *more* than the gospel contains, and hence show no disposition to know any thing of the peculiar and modern doctrines of the Romish church; and yet you have seen from the passages quoted from Christ and his apostles in our earlier conversations, that the bible every where declares simple evangelical faith in the divine Saviour, as sufficient for salvation and makes our eternal destiny pre-eminently dependent on a christian life. Besides this, the popes have set this bad example to the christian world, that although they wish to be successors of Christ and the apostles, and receive all their power from them, yet they have established doctrines and ceremonies which are opposed to the express direction of Christ and the apostles. They have set the example of conscious and premeditated disobedience. Thus Jesus at the last supper distributed the cup, so also the apostles and the whole apostolical church, but the popes and the bishops deny the cup to the laity. Paul thus several times writes, (1 Tim. iii. 2, 12. Tit. i. 6.) “a bishop shall be the husband of *one* wife,” but the pope and his bishops have established

as law, a bishop shall be the husband of *no* wife." Paul 1 Tim. iv. 3, censures those who forbid marriage and command abstinence from meats, and in ver. 8, utters the correct principle: "bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," but the popes and the bishops forbid the priests to marry, declare celibacy to be a more blessed state, and teach that men avert the punishments of God and render satisfaction for their sins, by works of fasting and other bodily exercises.

HENRY.—I can scarcely believe, dear father, that our church has ever declared *celibacy* to be a more pious state than matrimony. For how then could she honor marriage as a sacrament!

BERNHARD.—The 10th canon of the 24th session of the council of Trent reads thus:

"If any one declares that matrimony is to be preferred to celibacy, and that it is not *better* and *more blessed* to remain in celibacy than to marry; let him be accursed."

Here indeed there is no prohibition of marriage, but still marriage is declared as not good, a sort of necessary evil, and it is maintained that it is more blessed, (*beatus*) that is, it more certainly leads to salvation to be unmarried. In this your church stands in open contradiction to the apostle, who says, the bishop shall be the husband of one wife, who blames those who forbid marriage, and in 1 Tim. ii. 15, says of the married woman, "she shall be saved in child bearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety." It contradicts the institution of God from the beginning, who (Gen. ii. 18.) said at the creation of the woman: "it is *not good* for man to be alone," inasmuch as you teach, it is better and *more blessed* that he remain alone. Yea, you thereby censure God, who in creating two sexes and commanding them "be fruitful and multiply!" rendered matrimony necessary for establishing a state that was not good and blessed. Whilst the whole Old Testament declares children to be a blessing of God, you censure the

lawful union of the sexes, which provides for the propagation of the human race, as a condition not so good and blessed as celibacy.

MOTHER.—And how low does the Catholic church thereby degrade the one-half of the human race? Does she not consider women as a sort of evil and seducers of men into a less happy and blessed condition? Does she not thereby express her disapprobation of the high and noble duties of mother and housewife? O really it is much more difficult to bear the burdens of domestic life, to fulfil the duties of mother at the sacrifice of health and peril of life, to bring up with anxiety and care pious children for the world and the church of God, than to sit idly in a convent and sing psalms.

WILHELMINA.—And if it be true, that both sexes have their peculiar natural character, that the unmarried and distinct life of both sexes only makes selfish beings of them, but that the true character of mankind is only developed in domestic, married life, when the parties communicate to each other their natural good qualities, then the declaration of your unmarried bishops at Trent appears still more unbecoming, and contradictory to the designs of the Creator. What could these bishops, neither of whom ever had a wife, understand about matrimony and the nature and condition of the female sex! It is already bad and unreasonable enough, that the men alone without consulting the women, make all the laws respecting matrimony; but ten times worse, when the law-makers are *officially* unmarried.

HENRY.—Do you not know, Wilhelmina, that the apostle (1 Cor. xiv. 34,) says, “it is not permitted unto the women to speak in the church?”

BERNHARD.—The apostle is there speaking merely of their preaching or holding discourses on doctrines, which certainly would not comport with the modesty of the tender sex, and for which their soft feminine voice is not adapted. But when men frame laws relating to marriage, or a system of domestic discipline, or any thing else, which con-

cerns the maternal state, I regard it as highly proper to consult intelligent women on the subject.

HENRY.—True as all is that you have said about the praise which our church bestows upon celibacy, yet I must observe, that the doctrine of the council of Trent has the declaration of the apostle Paul in its favor, who (1 Cor. vii. 1, 8,) says, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman;”—“I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them to abide even as I; But if they cannot contain, let them marry.”

BERNHARD.—I am well acquainted with those passages; but their application is totally different. For why does Paul advise against marrying at that time? Not because he thought it *better* and *more blessed* to remain unmarried, not because thereby the way to christian perfection and virtue would be found more easy, as you teach; but because he expected the approach of very troublesome times, when misfortune could be more easily borne, if persons were alone, than if bound by wife or husband and children. This he says in 26th verse; “I suppose therefore that this is *good* for the *present distress*, I say, that it is good for a man so to be,” that is, remain unmarried. The apostle, as was the case with the first church generally, believed, that the second coming of Christ was very near and also the approach of the melancholy times and alarms, which Christ (Matt. 24,) had prophesied would precede his coming. On that account they held it *good* (not *more blessed*) to remain unmarried. Now since these apprehensions were unfounded, the whole ground of their well meant advice is removed for modern christians.

HENRY.—But therein you seem to lessen the reputation of the apostles, if you believe they erred about the time of the second coming of Christ.

BERNHARD.—By no means; for Jesus repeatedly told them, that they would receive no revelation on that point; hence they were left to their own conjectures on that subject, like all other christians. For after Jesus (Matt. xxiv.)

had spoken of his coming, he added; (vr. 36,) "but of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my father only." And when the apostles asked him, (Acts i. 6,) whether he would at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel, he answered, (vr. 7,) "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the father hath put in his own power."

FATHER.—You see then, Henry, that the popes and the bishops have spoken of matrimony, in a manner that contradicts the doctrines of the holy scriptures. And how do the principles and actions of your priests and the popes militate against the commands of the gospel respecting *human government*? Paul writes, Rom. xiii. 1. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." And 1 Tim. ii. 1. "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made *for all men*; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a *quiet* and *peaceable* life in all godliness and honesty." And Peter says, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 17. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake! whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto his governors. Fear God! honor the king." This is the voice of the holy apostles. But what has the pretended successor of Peter done? He dissolved the oath of allegiance of the subjects of the German emperors, of the kings of France, of England, and Naples, he set up and deposed emperors and kings, bestowed away kingdoms, and maintained that he could give and take away crowns.

HENRY.—But that was only in the times of the dark ages!

FATHER.—Well only hear what the Pope wrote as late as April 16th, 1701, to the king of France and other Catholic rulers, on the occasion of the elector of Brandenburg, Frederick the 3rd, taking upon himself the dignity of a king of Prussia.

"Beloved son in Christ! Although we believe that your majesty will in no wise sanction the proceeding of Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg, who setting a *most infamous* example to the christian world, has undertaken publicly to usurp the royal title; yet we cannot let it pass by in silence, because such a deed is opposed to the *character of papal institutions*, and is *injurious* to the reputation of the sacred chair, inasmuch as the sacred royal dignity cannot be assumed by a person who is not a Catholic, *without a contempt of the church.*"

But the kings and governors, for which Paul and Peter command men to pray, and to whom they enjoin obedience, were even *heathen*, namely, the Roman emperors, their governors and magistrates. But the popes do not even "*honor*" christian kings, and wish to be the rulers, not only of Catholic, but also of Evangelical princes; the pious apostles wished that christians should pray for heathen emperors and governors, but the late Pope Leo in his bull on the jubilee warns the faithful to pray for "*Catholic princes,*" but not for Evangelical rulers, and also for "*the extirpation of heresy.*" But the contradiction extends still further. Paul commands the christians at Rome, (Rom. xiii. 6, 7,) to pay without refusal the tribute imposed by the heathen authorities, but the popes maintain that without their consent no prince has a right to impose taxes on his subjects.

HENRY.—What pope ever uttered such monstrous arrogance?

FATHER.—Urban the 8th, who in 1627 issued the famous Green Thursday Bull, containing seventeen maledictions, which on every Green Thursday is read in St. Peter's church at Rome, in which it is said word for word;

"We ex-communicate and condemn all, who in their countries impose or increase, or demand to be imposed or increased, any *new taxes* or assessments, except in such cases which are GRANTED them by right, or *by particular permission of the apostolical chair.*"

Confess, dear son, that in these things your popes have

exalted themselves above Christ himself and the apostles, and demand more obedience for themselves, than for those whose vice-gerents and successors they pretend to be. Yet Jesus says, (Matt. x. 24,) "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." And here is the ground of their prohibition to the laity to read the scriptures in the language of the country, not so much, because they believe that it would be injurious to the laity, but because they fear that the laity might find many things in the bible quite different from what the popes and bishops have established.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE CUP IN THE SACRAMENT—EXTREME UNCTION—ANTONIO'S RESOLUTION.

Sunday arrived, and the whole family as usual, attended church where the Lord's Supper was administered to numerous communicants. Antonio did not fail to be present, and lost not a single word of the whole service. As the members of the family after church were collected together in the garden, and the young Neapolitan was engaged in some business near them, the mother, who entertained a very favorable opinion of him, asked him how he had been pleased with the Evangelical celebration of the Lord's Supper? Antonio extolled it as very appropriate and edifying. He was particularly pleased, that the Lord's Supper was not administered as amongst the Catholics, in Latin, but in the language of the country, and that the cup was also distributed.

"How did it happen, Henry, (asked the mother,) that in the Romish church the cup is refused to the laity? there appears to me to be no reason at all for it."

HENRY.—The council of Trent in the 21st session, says, “We dare not doubt, that the partaking in one kind is sufficient for salvation. For, although Christ instituted the supper in both kinds, of bread and wine, but yet it does not follow, that all faithful christians are bound to partake in both kinds.\*

MOTHER.—I should like to know, why not? If the words of the Saviour, “*take and eat*” authorizes the partaking of the bread, with equal right do the words “*drink ye all of this,*” authorize the partaking of the cup. If the latter is not obligatory on *all* christians, I cannot see how the former is binding on all. The whole ancient church partook of bread and wine, as the passage, 1 Cor. xi. fully shows.

HENRY.—The council acknowledges that, in as much as they say, “though it is true that partaking in both kinds was common in the beginning of christianity, yet that custom in the lapse of time changed to a very great extent.”

ANTONIO.—But it did not follow from that, that this custom was good and right, and that they were authorized to establish it as law. In doing that they certainly sinned against the express words of Christ; “*drink ye all of this.*”

FATHER.—Neither is it true, what the council says of this custom. It first arose only in the twelfth century in England; hence the Greek church which separated from the Latin, as early as the eleventh century, always distributed the wine. But the ground of it was the opinion which was first raised in the ninth century, that bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of Christ. Because it was feared, that the laity would let a drop of the blood of the Godman fall to the earth, or wipe it from their mouth, they gradually withdrew the cup from them in consequence of this superstitious fear.

HENRY.—The Romish catechism also gives other grounds; namely, the wine would become sour, if it were kept, like the host.

\*See Appendix, No. XII.

FATHER.—And yet why do you preserve the wine? Because you believe it is no longer wine, but blood of the God-man. But that it becomes sour shows plainly that it is yet wine.

HENRY.—The catechism says further; there are also many who cannot endure the taste of wine, yea, not even the smell, and in many countries there is great scarcity of wine, and the procurement of it difficult and expensive.

FATHER.—Unfounded reasons! Wine is not offensive to one in a million of men; why should it be withheld from all? Shall we abolish preaching, because a few in the congregation are deaf? If wine in some cold countries is difficult to procure, it should not be also forbidden in warm countries. But the small quantity that is used in the Lord's supper, can be procured in all countries of the world. All these things could at farthest only justify an exception to the rule, but never could constitute a rule.

ANTONIO.—Eating and drinking belong together, and are essential to human life. As these in the sacrament are figures of heavenly food or of grace, both must be given to men, as Jesus gave not only bread to eat, but also wine to drink. A half a sacrament is no sacrament at all.

HENRY.—The Romish catechism furnishes another reason, and that is the doctrine of *concomitance*, which the Council of Trent also established in the 13th session, viz: that the blood is also contained in the body of Christ, and hence the partaking of the bread is at the same partaking of the blood of Christ.

FATHER.—I am acquainted with that invention of the scholastics, but can never think of it without disgust. For the thought of the *bloody flesh* of Christ is something exceedingly indelicate to me.

MOTHER.—But they certainly do not mean that.

HENRY.—Assuredly! For the Romish catechism in express words declares it to be a heretical error, if any one maintains that the bread contains the mere *bloodless body* (*exsanguine corpus*) of the Lord.

**MOTHER.**—Then I must confess, that I can have no conception of what you call the bloody body of the Lord. That fresh killed meat is bloody, I well know; but to apply this to the glorified body of Christ, is to me out of all reason. This vulgar conception also flatly contradicts the apostle Paul. He describes the bodies of those risen, and the body of Christ since his resurrection, (1 Cor. xv. 42, &c.) quite differently. He says, “It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; (but not consisting of flesh and blood;) it is sown a natural body; (consisting of flesh and blood;) it is raised a *spiritual* body. Ver. 50. “Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” In Phil. iii. 21, he says: “Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.”

**ANTONIO.**—As respects myself, I hold to this, that Jesus took the cup and said, drink ye all of this! The learned subtlety, that the blood was in the flesh, Jesus certainly knew as well as the bishops of Trent, and hence, if it had had any application here, he could have spared himself the distribution of the cup. It would also follow from that, that the cup was not at all to be taken, and that the priests in no case had to drink it.

**FATHER.**—Antonio is perfectly right. Thus they could also baptize in the name of God, and not according to the command of Christ, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, because according to the doctrine of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are in God.

**HENRY.**—I must acknowledge to you, friends, that there is no tenable ground for withholding the cup. But the evangelical church has not done right in abolishing *extreme unction*, inasmuch as it was undoubtedly instituted by the apostle James.

**FATHER.**—Let us read the passage in its connection; James v. 13—“Is any among you afflicted, let him pray. Is any merry, let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray

over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the *prayer of faith* shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and *pray one for another, that ye may be healed.* . The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." You see that the apostle gives good rules, which refer to three conditions, namely, affliction, joy, and sickness. You cannot contend that the third good rule is the institution of a sacrament, or you must also grant, that it is also a sacrament to pray in the days of affliction, and to sing psalms in the days of joy. The first two rules, no one has ever explained as prescribing a sacrament, and consequently the third cannot be so considered. But what the apostle here advises is not your extreme unction. Among you it is performed by *one* man, and he is the *priest*; but the apostle says the *elders*, not the *elder*. He did not regard it as a priestly business, and hence at the conclusion, he says, *pray one for another; confess your faults one to another.* He excludes none; he speaks of that which all should reciprocally do, not of that, which concerns the priest. But he does not deduce any particular effect from the anointing with oil. We see from Mark vi. 13, where it is said, "they cast out many devils, and *anointed with oil* many that were sick, and *healed them*," that anointing with oil was a medical application, which is yet practiced in the east. You on the other hand teach, that oil, because consecrated by the bishops, has a sacramental influence in driving away the devil from the departing soul, and procuring for it the grace of God. James only mentions the use of oil, because at that time it was customary, and rather refutes the opinion that oil had a particular effect, inasmuch as he says, "and the *prayer of faith* shall save the sick—for it availeth much." It is not the oil, but the prayer that he holds out as the principal thing, so that christians should not think that any dependence was to be placed on the use of oil. If then an evangelical christian in sickness calls for pious friends, or

his minister to pray for him, he conforms to this direction of the apostle, who gives it, not to ordain *a sacrament for the dying*, but to aid the sick *in their recovery*. Only for the last object does the Greek church practice the anointing with oil.

**ANTONIO.**—I am at least convinced that my Saviour will not reject me, if I die without being anointed by a priest, provided I do what he demands of those, who enter into life, that is, keep his commandments. With the genuine christian his whole life must be an extreme unction.

**FATHER.**—You are right, Antonio! Adhere to that and be constantly diligent in the practice of christian virtue; then you dare not fear that a priest can close the gates of Heaven against you. But you do not need him to open them for you; priests and laymen are equally subject to the judgment of God, and both need his grace.

**ANTONIO.**—I am glad that you think so precisely with me, and this gives me courage to ask two questions! They are these; whether I dare celebrate the Lord's supper with the congregation here, and whether the pastor would reject me as a Catholic?

**FATHER.**—Antonio—you appear too intelligent, that I should consider these questions, with which you surprise me, as the result of inconsiderateness. Hence I must tell you, that you cannot celebrate the Lord's supper with us, if you still regard us as heretics and condemned, and not as your christian brethren; for the Lord's supper is a feast of brotherly love, and they who celebrate it, must regard each other as brethren.

**ANTONIO.**—If that is the condition, then I can commune with you with a good conscience. I am no longer a Roman Catholic, but an evangelical christian, and I acknowledge the christians of this country as my real brethren, and will hereafter hold to them. Do not look at me with so much surprise! I am in real earnest, and it is my maturely considered determination.

FATHER.—But who, dear friend, taught and instructed you?

ANTONIO.—Here,—this book! the gospel,—the discourses of Jesus, and the writings of the apostles. These alone I will hereafter hear, for they *alone* are the original teachers of christianity. The pope I will leave in possession of his dignity and honors, but I can no longer consider him as the vice-gerent of Christ, nor the supreme bishop of christians, and I can no longer believe him and the bishops, except in as far as they teach out of this holy book.

FATHER.—If that is your sincere conviction, then you have adopted the fundamental principle which we maintain against the Romish church; then you are in so far an evangelical christian. But—Antonio, have you considered every thing! O be precipitate in nothing; for it is dangerous to be rash in such an important matter. I will not dissuade you from taking a decided step, but far be it from me, to persuade you to it. Your own inclination must actuate you, your own conviction guide you; for you alone are answerable for what you do, and not another.

ANTONIO.—I have considered all things well. No earthly expectation, no hope of gain actuates me; my faith draws me,—my own heart. O if you only knew, how it was with my soul once, and how it is now! Once, anguish, fear, anxiety; now, contentment, joy, confidence!

MOTHER.—I believe you, Antonio! You are not deceiving us!—grant him his request, dear husband!

FATHER.—In this matter I can properly neither grant nor refuse; but I can advise, and especially, because Antonio has here no friend, except ourselves, and is a stranger in the country. Remember, Antonio, that you as a Romanist can reckon upon much support and aid from your brethren in the faith in this country, which you will loose, so soon as you unite yourself with us.

ANTONIO.—I have thought of that and do not desire to be aided and preferred to worthy natives of the country on such grounds.

FATHER.—If you are really in earnest, you must do one thing before hand; you must go and mention your determination to some minister of this place and must suffer yourself to be examined and instructed as far as is necessary. My son will allow you the necessary time.

ANTONIO.—I feel, that this, even if not necessary, is still proper, and am prepared to do it. But have the goodness yourself to speak to the pastor before hand on this subject, so that he may know what my object is, when I come to him.

FATHER.—That I will do; but then you must go to him yourself and inform him of your determination.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### HENRY IN A DILEMMA.—A MAN CAN BE A GOOD CHRISTIAN AS A CATHOLIC.

The conversation of this evening related exclusively to Antonio. The mother extolled the extensive knowledge he had gained of the New Testament, the father applauded his clear understanding and correct views, Wilhemina spoke in admiration of his amiable disposition, and Henry bore testimony to his fidelity and honesty. Henry related the interviews he had had with Antonio about his religious scruples, by which the father was yet more deeply convinced, that it was nothing but the silent power of the divine word which had here purified a mind from erroneous opinions engrafted upon it in its youth; which gave him occasion to say jocosely, that after this he would not think it strange in the pope to exhibit so much zeal against the reading of the bible by the laity.

These remarks relative to the change of mind in the servant, were so well suited to the master, that he could

not avoid feeling their applicability to himself. The youthful sincerity of Wilhemina had often induced her earnestly to request him to abandon his Romanism, and without saying any thing more about it again to return to the evangelical church. A formal, public adoption of the faith did not appear to her to be necessary. Henry would willingly have submitted to that proposal, if his conversion to the Romish church had really been so little known to the public, as he at first flattered himself. Notwithstanding the family had kept it a secret, yet it became extensively known, they did not know how. Even the day, on which Henry adopted the Romish confession, and all the minute circumstances attending it were spoken of in public. Only a short time before, a Romish physician, by the name of S. Frederick had settled in the place, where he was much esteemed for his intelligence and moral worth;—he was distinguished for his liberality to the poor, for he not only accepted nothing for his services, but even furnished the medicines at his own expense. Only a few days before, he had saluted Henry in public company as his brother in the faith, and unpleasant as was the salutation, yet Henry had publicly to acknowledge himself a Romanist. At the same time the doctor told him, though secretly, that his conversion had been heard of in D. and that it was expected, he would betake himself thither for protection, where he would be most heartily welcomed. Under these circumstances, it appeared to Henry that a silent return to the Evangelical church, as though nothing had happened, would only give occasion to greater clamour and public conversation.

The mother entertained a different view of the subject. She could not refrain from telling the son, how happy she would be, if he would retrace the precipitate steps he had already made. How cheerfully would he have done it, if it could have been accomplished without shame and exciting public observation! For he had to acknowledge, that he was no longer a Catholic in faith, that all his doubts against

the Evangelical church had been removed, and that he had completely failed in justifying his conversion.

The father had thus far maintained a total silence. But it was this silence which made Henry feel, as men do on a sultry day before an approaching storm. He well knew the decisive, resolute character of his father; and was not deceived on this occasion. For the father, after he had asked him in the evening, whether he had yet any thing important to advance in justification of his conversion to the Romish church, and Henry had answered in the negative, at once demanded his immediate return to the Evangelical church. "You have, said he, yourself acknowledged and was forced to grant, that all the advantages which you plead in favour of the Romish church, and by which you sought to justify your course, are either possessed by our church, or are unfounded, and on the other hand all the charges you preferred against our church, were groundless. Yea, what was most important of all, you were forced to grant that the Evangelical church admirably serves the whole design of christianity, but that this was not the case with the Romish church; you yourself proposed and sanctioned the principle, that in such a case it was the privilege and duty of a man to abandon his church, and to choose the church which really answered the design of Christ;—you have (he continued in an elevated voice) given me your solemn promise to fulfil that duty; I now demand the fulfilment of that promise."

**HENRY.**—But, dearest father, what a noise will such a step occasion! In what a disadvantageous light I shall appear! I shall be regarded as a fickle minded youth, and they will believe that I became a Catholic from motives of worldly policy. The Catholics will hate me; the members of the Evangelical church will mistrust me—perhaps despise me! Ah! dear father, release me from my promise!

**FATHER.**—Only see, how conscientious you are about the opinions of the world!—But you did not think, when you abandoned your own church, that you would grieve your

parents, forfeit their love, become offensive to your fellow citizens, and that at your return they would look upon you with mistrust, contempt, or the better disposed of them with pity? Then, when error was in question, all this was nothing; but now, when the truth is in question, you seem to be very tenderly concerned about the judgment of the world! take care, Henry! You yet have time to regain the esteem and love of your friends, or to lose them forever!

MOTHER.—Speak more mildly to your son, dear husband, only think, that he was far distant from us and from all his friends when he made that inconsiderate step. If he had become unfaithful to the truth, here in our midst, then your severe judgment might have been justified.

WILHELMINA.—Besides, it was not a fault of his heart, but of his head. If we had had such evening conversations with Henry, before he went to Italy, as we have had since his return, he would most certainly have continued faithful. And I think, dear father, you should have done that, for you might have expected, that your son would not be permitted to live in Rome unassailed.

FATHER.—I confess my fault, and I have exerted myself to the utmost to repair the injury it has done. But he acknowledges his fault, and yet desires to persevere in it,—persevere in it from vanity, on account of the perverted judgment of a few, although his conscience tells him to do what I demand of him. And if I was at fault for not warning him when he went to Rome, he is doubly to be blamed for becoming a Romanist without asking intelligent advice on the subject. He did precisely as some great characters do, who suffer themselves to be made Romanists because they are too exalted to consult an intelligent Evangelical minister, who would soon drive away the mist from their eyes, which the proselyters have raised before them.

MOTHER.—But do you believe it right, dear husband, to employ compulsion in matters of faith and duty?

FATHER.—How can you ask that question? We only compel obstinate children with the rod; intelligent men

must subdue themselves. But what application has that to this case?

MOTHER.—Do you not believe that you are exercising compulsion towards your son, when you let him feel your displeasure, and press the subject upon him with an earnestness, which powerfully affects his filial heart? Dear husband, I as heartily desire as you do, what you demand of him, and it will greatly add to the happiness of my life, if Henry fulfils our wishes. But his determination will only then be of any value to us, if he voluntarily makes and executes it.

FATHER.—I agree with you perfectly. But it is not applicable here, for I do not wish to force him to do a thing about the moral necessity of which he is doubtful, but merely to overcome the infirmities which hinder him from following the dictates of his conscience.

HENRY.—But, dear father, there are many excellent Catholics, who do not believe all that their church has even established as true, but are entirely Evangelical in their sentiments, and yet remain in the communion of their church. Will you on that account condemn them?

FATHER.—That is quite another case. The Romanist who lives in a country where the Evangelical faith is forbidden as heretical, may well be excused, if he does not separate from his church. For in that case there are important duties, which he has to perform for his civil welfare and the happiness of his family. And I have already said, that a few errors and abuses, which we observe in our church, will not justify us in abandoning it, but that this is only the case when the church to which we belong, does not serve nor promote, perhaps hinders the design of christianity, which is to deliver men from the dominion of sin. In a country, such as Italy, Spain or Portugal, a Romanist will not easily come to this opinion about his church. But if this were the case, he would be bound by his conscience, to withdraw himself from his church. But a Romanist who lives in a country where the Evangelical

church is lawfully tolerated, and who comes to the opinion that the Romish church does not answer the design of christianity, but that the Evangelical church does, him I regard as absolutely bound in conscience, publicly to honor the acknowledged truth and to join that church, which does not serve the kingdom of the world, but the kingdom of God. This is your case,—and the obligation is doubly binding on you as an apostate from the true church.

**HENRY.**—Only one question, do not become angry, dear father! let me ask only one question more. Do you not believe, that as a Catholic I can be as good a christian, as if I were again to return to your church? Must you not acknowledge, that in all christian denominations there are good and bad christians, and that even with an erroneous confession of faith a man may attain to the object of christianity for himself?

**FATHER.**—I have already said what was equivalent to an answer to this question in our first conversation, when I proved to you, that it is a duty to leave a church under certain conditions. But I will say a little more on this point. I by no means deny, that there may be many excellent men and very good christians in your church. But that is no ground to maintain, that in every church alike, a man may become a good christian, and that therefore, it is not necessary to unite himself to the better church. What would you have said, if the Greeks and Romans at the time of the first publication of christianity, had thus expressed themselves; “in our heathenism we have also many excellent men, as Socrates, Plato, and others; men can also be good even as idolaters, who fear God and do right; therefore we continue in it?” Or do you regard schools as superfluous, because among all nations, even where there were no learned institutions, learned and intelligent men have risen? We should never depend upon the hope that we would be exceptions to the general mass, that we would be unhurt by the influence of erroneous opinions, and of customs injurious to morality, and that we did not need the influence of the

truth. You would not certainly sanction it, if a man would associate with persons who were full of errors, and abandoned to licentious indulgences, in the hope, that he could counteract the influence of such society. Thus you cannot say, that you will keep yourself free from the pernicious influence, which the doctrines of your church respecting the priesthood, forgiveness of sin, indulgence, penance, the duty of blind obedience, and the condemnation of heretics, would have upon your mind. And even if you could do this, yet you would be without the excitements to a knowledge of the truth and the practice of piety, which the Evangelical preaching, the free use of the scriptures, and the Evangelical worship afford. In my opinion it is easier and more certain to be a good christian in the Evangelical church, than out of her, and that men can become better christians within her pale, than out of it. And it is a duty not to despise such aid, but to employ it.

MOTHER.—You must also remember, dear Henry, that the Saviour expressly demands of you to confess his gospel, and that you dare not slight the word of God without offending him. If all men had thought as you do, namely, that a man may be a good man, and may believe whatever he pleases, your Saviour would not have found fault with the doctrines of the Pharisees, the apostles would have continued to be Jews, and the fathers of the church, heathen, and there would have been no witnesses of the truth in the christian church.

WILHELMINA.—I believe that I can illustrate the matter very plainly to my brother by a simile, which you will no doubt think very proper for a lady expecting shortly to be a bride. If I had to choose between two gentlemen, one of whom bore so very good a character for intelligence and morality, that I must believe, he would make me a happy wife, but the other by his selfishness and many imperfections threatened to make me miserable, I would be very much to blame, if I would reject the former and choose the latter, flattering myself that I was strong enough to resist all the

pernicious influence of his daily intercourse and most intimate society. Thus you stand, dear brother, between two churches, to choose for yourself one or the other as your companion and guide for life. But it is usual and proper, that persons require time for consideration in such an important choice, and I think, father, that we should allow Henry time for meditation that he may make up his mind fully.

This proposition of Wilhelmina met with general approbation;—all acknowledged it was very reasonable, and they agreed, that only after the lapse of eight or ten weeks would they again introduce this subject of conversation.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

HENRY AND ANTONIO—LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION—END.

Whilst Henry was fluctuating, Antonio was rapidly proceeding in the proper path. He had gone to the pastor of the place, and mentioned his desire of attaching himself to the Evangelical church. The pastor examined him very closely on his motives for this step; for he suspected that there was something impure at bottom. The candor of Antonio, his deep religious feeling, his general character and circumstances, soon convinced the pastor, that the Evangelical church would gain in Antonio a sincere and respectable member. At length he sanctioned the determination of Antonio, and with great satisfaction devoted himself to the work of instructing him. But he soon saw with astonishment, how little he had to do. The young proselyte was so well acquainted with the New Testament, and had attained so distinct and fundamental a knowledge

of the essential features of christianity, founded upon the declarations of Christ and the apostles, which he quoted with facility, that his teacher found little to add to it. He only illustrated some truths more clearly, reduced them to order and systematic arrangement in his mind, removed some apparent difficulties, supplied some deficiencies, and made him acquainted with the Old Testament and the history of the christian church and reformation, of which Antonio had been yet ignorant. After the lapse of eight weeks he declared Antonio sufficiently instructed and qualified to be received into the communion of the church.

The day on which this was to take place, had already been appointed, when the change of climate manifested its influence on Antonio's health. A cold brought on a fever, which soon assumed a serious character, and endangered his life. The whole family felt the deepest anxiety in his behalf, and Henry particularly repaid the fidelity of his servant with the closest attention to his wants. He was continually at his bed side, and nursed him as he would a friend. But nothing could check the rage of the disease, which had now assumed a nervous type. Antonio himself knew his own condition well; he was certain of dying and prepared for his end.

"Dearest sir, I am dying!" he feebly said during one of his worst nights, whilst Henry was watching at his bed. "I am dying, but willingly and in peace. For what great thing have I to expect in this world. Only one thing grieves me, that I did not before my death publicly profess the gospel, and render that honor to the word of my Saviour before men, which is his due."

HENRY.—Be comforted, Antonio ; God will yet grant you life, to carry out your resolution.

ANTONIO.—Be it so or not; the will of God be done! Ah! I thank him most fervently, that he honored me so highly, as to bring me to a knowledge of the truth! What a miserable man would I not have been on my dying bed at an earlier day! Then I would have trembled in view of

purgatory. I would have tormented myself with painful confessions, I would have been perplexed about the power of priestly absolution, and felt myself separated from God through the mediation of the priest. O how happy am I, that I know my soul is not in the hands of the priest, and that it needs not the intercession of the saints, but is in the hands of God my Saviour! I have done, according to my ability at least, what the word of God enjoined upon me, and I am certain, that I shall enter into life, depending only on the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ, my God and Saviour, whose "blood cleanseth from all sin."

HENRY.—Cling to that consoling conviction, Antonio.

ANTONIO.—I will—I will—I am certain I will! God grant me grace to persevere to the end! But—(extending his hand,)—hear the dying request of a sincere heart!—Do you also again honor the word of God before the world!

HENRY.—Antonio, if I do the will of God, as you have done, am I not then a good christian, and can I not be as happy as you are, whatever church I belong to?

ANTONIO.—But it is the will of God that you abandon error, and publicly honor the truth. Such a confession before the world the Saviour demands. "Let your light shine before men, (said he, Matt. v. 16,) that others seeing your good works may glorify your father which is in heaven." But particularly hear his earnest language, (Matt. x. 32, 33,) "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my father, which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my father which is in heaven." O then go still farther and confess Jesus, and not his pretended vice-gerent, his gospel, and not the edicts of priestly councils, the necessity of filial obedience to God, in order to be saved, and not the necessity of obedience to priests; the need of the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ, and not the need of the absolution of men.

HENRY.—You move my heart, Antonio! Yes, I will determine! I will lay aside that shame which has hitherto

held me back ! I will follow you, dear friend, so that at last I also may meet death with the same composure and joyful anticipation of a blessed eternity !

ANTONIO.—God bless you in that resolution ! Thus you do right ! Thus you are more faithful and honest than those Pharisees, who, though they believed in Christ, yet did not confess him from the fear of men, because they, as the Evangelist reproachfully adds, (John xii. 43,) “loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.” Thus you are a worthy disciple of the apostles, who in the midst of all persecution acknowledged the truth, and cried out, (Acts v. 29,) “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Ah ! how utterly vain and worthless is the judgment of men when we are near the judgment seat of God ! But we are exposed to it also in the days of our health, and know not how soon we may be called.—

The sick man was silent ;—he seemed to have sank into a deep slumber. But as Henry approached nearer, he saw his face covered with the paleness of death. No respiration—no pulse was longer observable. Henry was powerfully affected, and in silence vowed to fulfil the last word of admonition of his departing friend. But he hastened after help, if help was any longer necessary. The physician was soon at the bed side of the patient ; the body was placed in a warm bath.—All in vain ! It was again laid in bed, and they were convinced, that the last spark of life had expired. But still he only slumbered. The deep swoon of the sick man was the crisis of his restoration. The windows were opened and the entrance of the fresh breeze awakened the faint spark of life anew. The father observed, as after some time he visited the presumed dead man, that his pulse had changed. He examined the body, and it appeared to him to grow warm. The physician being again called in, applied anew all the means of his art. After some hours the patient was restored to his senses, and soon after to his speech.

He was saved, and in a few weeks was again perfectly restored.

His gratitude to Henry and his parents was unbounded. Before this he had been attached to them tenderly, but now his heart was fettered to them. Henry's parents also loved the stranger; they also felt deeply obligated to him when they heard, how much the young man had contributed to induce Henry to retrace his steps and thus remove a burden of anxiety from his parents. Just as the father was consulting with his wife on the most proper course to be pursued with respect to Antonio, and procuring useful employment for him, he himself approached the father and requested advice as to his future pursuits in Germany. The father examined the acquirements of the young man, which were not very extensive. He spoke and wrote German and Italian, he had a little knowledge of Geography, Natural History, Arithmetic and French. As he wrote a very beautiful hand, which without instruction he learned by his own practice, and what was the principal thing, had good natural abilities and a disposition to improve, the father resolved to employ him in his own counting room as assistant clerk, allowing him at first a small salary with the promise of increasing it as Antonio became more expert in business and useful to the establishment.

No one was more happy than Antonio. His most fervent wish was to remain in the family of these benevolent persons, in whom he seemed to have found his second parents. He could scarcely wait until the time when he was to enter upon his new office. Every hour he was not employed in the store, he devoted to the improvement of his mind, and thus daily became more useful to his patron.

It was a peculiarly happy day for him and the whole family, on which he with Henry was received into the bosom of the Evangelical church. In order to avoid observation and gratifying idle curiosity, their reception or the confirmation did not take place publicly before the congregation, but in a church used for week day services, which was little

frequented, but on the next Lord's day, both publicly celebrated the Lord's supper with the other members of the family. Henry had resumed his philological studies, against which all his prejudices had vanished, and prepared himself for a professorship in a gymnasium. He had conceived a prejudice, though unsounded, against painting, which had been the occasion of leading him astray.

After some time he quite incidentally took up, from among his papers, some letters, which he had brought with him from Italy, which purported to be recommendations to the Rev. Father N—. They were now useless and he had determined to destroy them. But the father, when he heard of it, was of a different opinion, and believed that they at least deserved to be read, that they might ascertain the good opinion of his Italian friends and their expectations of him which were now blasted by Henry's return to the Evangelical church. The curiosity of the mother and Wilhelmina seconded that resolution, which Henry rather reluctantly consented to from a secret apprehension that something unpleasant might be discovered. The letters were opened, and they contained nothing but praise of Henry, with the request to promote in every possible way the worldly prosperity of this "faithful son in Christ." The father wondered at their barren contents. He examined the letters very closely, to see if nothing secret could be found; but all in vain. At length he observed that the space between the lines was very great, and that one whole page was left blank. He expressed the presumption, that the paper might contain another letter written in sympathetic ink, the writing of which would only become visible, when the paper was dipped in a certain chemical solution. He was well acquainted with that process and determined on the spot to try the experiment.

He was not deceived. When the paper was taken out of the solution, a writing before invisible became distinct, the contents of which were not gratifying to Henry. His friend Rossi gave the Romish priest, to whom the letter was addressed, a correct description of Henry's character, par-

ticularly of his infirmities, through which he might be influenced. "Although (it was said among other things) he has become a Catholic from conviction, yet certain dependence is not yet to be placed on that, because he has not yet been properly brought to an unconditional faith in the word of the church. Besides, his early principles may again be easily awakened, especially through the influence of his parents, who, as I am told, are zealous Lutherans. For this reason, his servant has been instructed to watch him closely, and our excellent doctor Frederick will also know how to perform his duty. But yet it will be necessary to separate the young man from his parents as soon as possible. You will invite him to come to —. You will hold out the most brilliant promises to him, and introduce him to the society of such of the faithful, as are capable of watching and taking care of him; if he shows any disposition to retract, you will particularly remind him of the uncharitable judgment he will expose himself to before the world, an argument which is more powerful with him, than all others. You will take care that a faithful sister wins his affections, who is instructed to declare that she can love none other than a Catholic; you will in a word, know how to manage every thing, so that he may be retained in the church. For although nothing particular is gained in him, inasmuch as he is a mere dauber in his art, yet the honor of the church demands that he be retained, and the extensive wealth of the father deserves that we take especial care of his heir. The servant, a good Catholic, who is educated in obedience to the church, you can easily keep to his duty by spiritual punishments. But whether the alarm of spiritual punishments is yet to be applied to his master you can judge of by circumstances, and easily ascertain from some attempts very carefully made."

At the reading of this letter Henry's face changed colour, he blushed and grew deadly pale by turns. Shame for his weakness and indignation at these deceitful instructions filled his heart at the same time. He found that Rossi, had

without his knowledge, held a correspondence about him and his parents; he saw with shame how little importance they attached to him, and how they only regarded him worthy of notice inasmuch as he was the heir of a considerable fortune. Yet this feeling of shame purged his soul of the last remnant of vanity, which had so long prevented him from fulfilling the desires of his parents, and hearing the voice of his own better convictions. He was glad that the letters were now first decyphered, after his return to the Evangelical church. The father said nothing. He saw that this letter required no illustration for his son. The mother laughed at the mistake of the wily Rossi about Antonio, and wished that he might learn to his shame, how the gospel had done more, than all his well arranged instruction. Henry told his parents, how Antonio himself had revealed to him the instructions he had received at his last confession at Rome. The parents esteemed the young man still more highly on that account, and reposed still greater confidence in him.

The real character of Dr. Frederick, now began to be developed, from the mention made of his name in the letter, and it became gradually better known, as they compared together what they had heard of this man. It was not known whence he came. His manners were refined; his acquirements not inconsiderable; his conduct externally proper. Only towards the last, several things were said of him, which excited suspicion. As a physician he had been so charitable to the poor, that it was at last no subject of surprise that several of his patients had become Romanists. They were poor persons, who lived in obscurity. But it was more remarkable, that he attempted to convert to Romanism a distinguished lady, and the report even went so far as to say, that she was really converted before her death, and that the doctor administered extreme unction to her. He was applauded for persuading the few members of that communion in the place to establish a Romish school, but men wondered that he himself contributed such a consider-

rable sum towards it, when it was not known whence he obtained it. It was also attributed to his influence that the few Romanists of the town, who before had frequently attended the evangelical church, had since his residence among them absented themselves altogether, and had even withdrawn themselves very much from the society of evangelical christians. A Romish midwife was also established there by his influence, and was remunerated for her services out of his own pocket. Henry now remembered in what a remarkable manner this man publicly distinguished him as a Catholic, and how frequently he invited him to travel to M\_\_\_\_\_.

Taking all things together, the father concluded that Dr. Frederick was a proselyter, and perhaps a secret Jesuit, as this society now seeks in all possible ways, and in every disguise to insinuate itself in the favor of the people in Romish and evangelical countries.

I should think, said the father at last to Henry, it must now be very agreeable to you, my son, to be delivered from the power of a priesthood, which always surrounded their church members with a sort of secret police. On the other hand, how worthy of the religion of the Spirit is not the relation of the laity to their ministers with us! Our religion demands voluntary obedience, and faith from conviction! The truth does not need secret inspection and artifice. It maintains itself by its own innate power. It is only error, which is always in danger of annihilation from want of argument to support it, that must be laboriously maintained by this police system of espionage, but which only answers the purpose for a limited time. I cannot understand how it is, that whilst secret societies are dissolved and prohibited in all countries, (of Europe) yet that the much more secret and mighty *sacerdotal* orders, particularly the Jesuits, are still not only tolerated, but highly patronized!

HENRY.—Not only in Rome, but in many other countries is the restoration and patronage of the priestly power re-

garded as the surest support of all religion, and of the Catholic church particularly, and for this reason the pope was prevailed upon to annul the bull of his predecessor, Clemens the 14th, (1773) which dissolved the order, and restored it again. Particularly in France they promise themselves every thing from the restoration of the power of the priesthood.

**FATHER.**—It was a strange piece of business indeed, that the former pope, who certainly was as infallible as his predecessor Clemens, recalled his solemn and maturely considered bull of dissolution, and I wonder, how after such experience there can yet be a Romanist who can speak of the infallibility of the popes without blushing. But yet the history of the popes presents many stronger instances of contradictions, and still men act with respect to them, as though they had never occurred. But the hope, which men indulge from the power of the priesthood, and especially from the Jesuits, is delusive. The more powerful the influence is, the more intolerable will their yoke be for our times, and the more certainly will they promote the cause of the evangelical church.\* For it is the greatest folly for men in the 19th century to act as though they lived in the 15th, and to conduct themselves as though three centuries with their astonishing changes had not elapsed. Such unwise proceedings will only advance the progress of the reformation in the Romish church.

**HENRY.**—That they certainly do not believe. The Jesuits have also attempted to disseminate the opinion, especially in high places, that the French revolution was the consequence of the dissolution of the Jesuits, and that the

\*General Sebastiani, deputy of Corsica, in a speech delivered in the Chamber of Deputies on Feb. 26, 1827, expressed the effects which the new power of the priesthood had in France. “*Already, he said, you know it!*—already the apostacies (from the Romish church) are numerous—already more than 3000 persons in the vicinity of Lyons, have gone over to the Protestant communion!” This was not contradicted in the chamber. The powerful and dangerous reaction against the hierarchy in France since the revolution of July 1830, need not be related here.

priesthood ruling absolutely in the church was the strongest support of thrones, and the surest means of suppressing the *constitutional* fever of the populace.

FATHER.—But how can they convince any man of such a chimerical notion, who has the least knowledge of history! Frederick the Great, in his writings foretold the breaking out of the revolution in France, and grounded it on the disordered state of the finances, and the corruption of the higher classes. He could have added, the proximity of England and her parliament, the influence of North America, but above all the immense number of internal abuses. He who wishes to understand the French revolution, let him only read the memoirs of the times of Lewis the 14th, 15th, and 16th, which will afford him the deepest insight into the character of the court, the courtiers, and the higher classes. But as respects the priesthood of the Romish church, ever since the existence of popery, the annals of all the western kingdoms are full of narratives of the most fearful contests they have carried on against the princes.\* Many princes maintained their thrones against the priests with the greatest difficulty; many were really deposed by them. How could it be otherwise! In the evangelical church (in Europe) the ruler of the country is the supreme officer of the church, and thus through him, church and state are firmly united. Thus in Russia the Emperor is at the same time patriarch of the Greek church of his kingdom. But the Romish priesthood is bound in perfect obedience to a foreign monarch, the king of the ecclesiastical state, and hence constitutes a state within a state. Hence the Catholic princes always have their difficulties with their clergy, who under the protection of the pope, so willingly, and often with such favorable result to themselves, oppose themselves to the princes. They also possess this advantage over the Greek and evangelical clergy, that the Jesuits belonging to the holy priesthood, and so highly celebrated by them, have alone

\*See Appendix, No. XII.

among all christian priests, assumed to themselves the right of regicide and rebellion! Has all this knowledge of these men no effect on the minds of the people?

HENRY.—Many persons cannot be at all affected by experience of this kind!

FATHER.—So it would seem! For how else could men in our day believe what the enemies of our church have so often repeated, namely, that the religious liberty of the evangelical church encouraged a spirit of political revolution! Catholic France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, the whole of Catholic America has revolted since 1790, and has thus given proof that the Catholic priesthood cannot protect the government against revolution.\* This priesthood rather took an active part in these revolutions. In France the Catholic priests and inferior clergy powerfully promoted the revolution. In Spain and Portugal they were seen in great numbers under the Cortes. The Spanish priests constituted a very strong party under the name of the Apostolicals, who exerted themselves to the utmost to raise recruits for the king, and to be serviceable to him in every way. If our politicians wish to have proof of the happiness of a country in which the Romish priesthood exerts much influence, they need only look at Spain! The peace and quiet of the evangelical countries during this whole stormy period, should convince every one of the political harmlessness of the evangelical church. If you wish to read something solid and conclusive on this subject, then peruse the admirable book of Dr. Tzschrirner of Leipzig: "Protestantism and Catholicism, considered in the light of Politics." (Leipzig 1822, second edition.)

HENRY.—You know dear father, that the political system most prevalent now, is to uphold that which is old and long established, and to oppose innovation; the reformation is regarded as an innovation, and the Romish church as that which is *stationary* or an old established institution, and hence the latter is supported.

\*More recently France again, Belgium, Poland, and Italy itself.

FATHER.—Strange confusion of ideas! Which is the more ancient, the gospel or popery? When the reformation began three hundred years ago, popery was abandoned as an innovation, and men returned to the gospel, as that which was ancient and long established. And are not three hundred years, during which the evangelical church has existed, a period long enough to entitle her to be ranked amongst those things that are of ancient establishment? If this time is too short to entitle any thing to that distinction, then the present political condition of things cannot be justified, and every thing would have to return to the same state in which it was before the reformation. At that time there were no standing armies, no sovereignty or confederation of German princes, no absolute monarch, no permanent taxes, and the boundaries of the countries were different from what they are at present. But any man would be with propriety regarded as insane, who would wish to bring back the old order of things. The old state of things in politics only refers to the times preceding the great revolution. It should be so with respect to the church, and hence the evangelical church which has existed for three hundred years, should also be reckoned among the old established institutions.

MOTHER.—If only the evangelical subjects of Catholic princes do not suffer themselves to be persuaded to any thing like rebellion! If they did that, with some appearance of truth, they could say, that we were bad subjects.

FATHER.—You need be under no apprehension about that, dear wife. The members of the Evangelical church in Austria, Hungary, Transylvania, Russia, Bavaria and Saxony, have always proved themselves good subjects, and they will continue to be so, unless severe oppression rouses them. But the governments are too wise, too just, too christian, ever to surrender themselves to the blind zeal of the priesthood. I believe, that no people will ever rise against their rulers, if they are governed justly and mildly. Thus also, the Romanists under rulers who were not Romish, as in Russia, Silesia, lately in Prussia, Wirtemberg,

Bavaria and Holland, have proved themselves good subjects even if their priests did not always set them a good example.

MOTHER.—But is it not to be hoped, that finally the members of the Evangelical and Catholic churches will unite themselves into *one* communion?

FATHER.—That hope is as yet chimerical. If a union is ever to take place, the Romish church must separate herself from the pope, must restore the bible to its proper place, abandon the infallibility of the priesthood and the edicts of the council of Trent, especially discontinue the unchristian condemnation of all who are not Romanists, and thus form within herself an *Evangelical Catholic* church. This, I think, may be hoped; yea, from many appearances I would conclude, that there is already such a church, though invisible, among the Romanists, which will gradually be more fully developed and manifested to the world. The reformation of the Romish church must come from herself. Then they will consign to oblivion their decrees of the council of Trent, and their Romish catechism, and the Evangelical church will lay aside her symbolical books. They will substitute in their place the gospel, and learn from that to love each other as brethren, and to endure difference of views on non-essential points, without condemning each other as heretics. Then there will be true peace, and the prophecy of Jeremiah will be fulfilled (ch. xxxi. 34.) “And they shall teach no more every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.”

MOTHER.—But will this ever take place?

FATHER.—Certainly; but we will not live to see it. But in the mean time, let us honestly do what may contribute to bring about this desirable state of peace.

HENRY.—And above all, let the Evangelical church set a good example, and not wage an everlasting war against the Catholic church in writings and conversation. For what else will result from this, but hatred and alienation, which will only separate them still farther?

FATHER.—My son, it is our duty also to love our Romish fellow citizens and to do them good. But duty does not command us to love their errors, to consider their abuses as right; that would be “man pleasing and eye service.”

HENRY.—But would it not follow from our principles of freedom of conscience, to let the Catholic enjoy his faith and not contend against him?

FATHER.—You are wrong. By freedom of conscience we mean, that no one is to be punished by the civil or spiritual authority for religious opinions, as the priests do who punish heretics as criminals; and further that every one have permission to express his religious sentiments, and publicly to state his reasons, but this the Romish priesthood forbids. We members of the Evangelical church of course do not give up the latter privilege for ourselves in granting it to others, but lay an equal claim to it. If we allow the Romanist publicly to confess and defend his faith, it would be ridiculous, if we considered ourselves bound to maintain silence towards him. Jesus was not silent about the errors of the pharisees and scribes.

HENRY.—There you are right. The Catholics have no reason to take it so hard of the members of the Evangelical church, that they express their opinions, and they should not feel insulted and wronged, when they are opposed.

FATHER.—The Romish priesthood would certainly be pleased to say every thing themselves. But really they cannot complain, if we regard them always as enemies, and prove to them the strength of our well tempered weapons. For since the reformation, they have waged a continual war against us. The pope has from the beginning repeatedly, and then again at the council of Trent, condemned all Evangelical christians as heretics; he has never revoked this sentence of condemnation, and never acknowledged us as a church. On the other hand, at the peace of Westphalia (1648) and at the congress of Vienna, he repeatedly protested against the existence of the Evangelical church, and at the last Romish jubilee, he enjoined it as a duty on all

Catholics, not only to pray for the illumination of the erring, but also "*for the extirpation of heresy.*" Here are in truth all the conditions of the most perfect warfare, and nothing is wanting but political power to effect the *charitable* desire of Rome in the extermination of all heretics. Whilst then, Evangelical christians are continually declared by Rome to be a rebellious mob of heretics not to be endured, but exterminated; whilst the priests of this church continue to persecute us with the shameful accusations, as though we were nothing but revolutionists, who aimed at the destruction of christianity; shall we be silent, lay our finger on our mouths, and conduct ourselves as though we had a bad cause, which could not be defended? Yes, I know well that there are Evangelical christians, who either from weakness, or hood winked ignorance, or indifference to all truth, yield to all the presumption and arrogance of the Romish priesthood, make them the most obsequious salutations, speak of truth and error only in equivocal terms, for the purpose of winning the favour of these priests, by whom after all they are only despised. This is not confessing the Lord and his gospel before men; this is not seeking the honor of God rather than that of men. No! the truth demands that those who know it, should boldly confess it, and defend it against calumny. Christian love also demands that for our erring brethren. To maintain, to teach, to confess, to defend the truth,—let these be the distinguishing marks and symbols of genuine christians. But let it be only the *evangelical* doctrine, which we confess and defend. We will not be called Lutheran, or Zwinglian, or Calyinistic, but *evangelical*, so that when we invite the Romanist to hear the gospel, it may not appear, as though he were to go to Luther, Zwingli or Calvin. He will not go to them; but to Jesus and the apostles—I confidently hope!—to them will he go; them will he hear. Hence let us remain unwaveringly with these!

HENRY.—(Extending his hand) Thus let it be, dear father! and nothing in the world shall turn aside your son from this straight path!

FATHER.—Then you are again wholly mine!—come to my heart, my dearest son!

MOTHER.—God be thanked for this blessed day!

WILHELMINA.—O Henry, how happy you have made your parents!

HENRY.—I myself am the happiest of all! Now again is my heart at peace; for only in the truth is lasting peace to be found.

## A P P E N D I X.

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It will be expected of me to explain my object in appending the following extracts from the fathers of the church, that is, of the most distinguished teachers of the church of the first four centuries. The testimony of these ancient teachers is not intended to *prove* the evangelical system of doctrine; for the gospel does not need such evidence, for upon its truth rests the truth of the church and of the doctrines promulgated by her teachers. Neither is it intended to prove that the doctrines of the first four centuries, were those contained in the gospel, or that they agreed with the gospel. For this in reality was not the fact. But these men lived and taught in an age, when, though there was a Roman bishop, yet there was no pope, when the church had as yet a quite different external organization from the present Romish-papal church, and when nothing was known of so many doctrines and customs, which in subsequent ages were established as essential. These extracts are intended to show the extent of the influence which the gospel exerted, and of the estimation in which it was held in the early ages—to exhibit the groundlessness of the pretension, that the church, from the beginning, taught what the popes and the council of Trent established as truth at a later day, and to prove how far in many respects the Romish church has departed from the church of the first four centuries.

The following brief notices of the men, whose testimony is here introduced, are intended for those readers who are unacquainted with ecclesiastical history.

**CLEMENS** of Rome, perhaps a disciple of the apostle Peter, and afterwards bishop of the christian congregation at Rome. He is said to have died at the beginning of the second century. **HERMAS**,

a disciple of the apostles, whom Paul mentions in the epistle to the Romans, (ch. xvi. 14) and from whom we yet have a book under the title of **THE SHEPHERD**, but which many ascribe to a later Hermas, who lived about the year 140. **PAPIAS**, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, who lived near the times of the apostle John. **HEGESIPPUS** wrote a church history in the second half of the second century, of which there are yet several fragments extant. **IRENAEUS**, of Asia Minor, after he had heard the cotemporaries of the apostles, went to Lyons, in France, became a bishop there in 177, and died in 202.

**CLEMENS**, to distinguish him from Clemens of Rome, called the *Alexandrian*, was presbyter of the church in Alexandria, and teacher of the celebrated catechetical school there; was well acquainted with the Greek philosophy—died about the year 220. His most distinguished successor was **ORIGEN**, born in 185 at Alexandria, died at Tyre in 254—at the same time presbyter of the church at Alexandria, principal of the above named school, and one of the most prolific writers of the fathers.

**TERTULLIAN** lived at the end of the second, and beginning of the third century—was presbyter at Carthage in Africa, and one of the most important writers of the early church. In the latter year of his life he embraced the opinions of the Montanists. **CYPRIAN** was bishop of Carthage in 248 or 249, and died a martyr in 225.

**ARNOBIUS**, teacher of eloquence in Sicca in Africa, lived at the beginning of the fourth century.

**LACTANTIUS**, born in Africa, at first was teacher of eloquence in Nicodemia; thence was called to France as preceptor of the son of Constantine in 317, where he probably died.

**EUSEBIUS** was bishop of Caesarea about the year 314, and was the author of the first history of the christian church, which has come down to our times. The so called *Constitutions of the Apostles* are directions about the organization of the church, the worship, the life of christians, &c. which are said to have been composed by the apostles. But they are of a more recent date, and uncertain age, but containing much that is old of the second and third centuries, besides some things new.

## TESTIMONY OF THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES.

### I.

#### ON PRIESTLY ABSOLUTION.

Clemens of Rome, knew nothing of a priestly power, which was capable of opening and closing the gates of heaven. But in his second epistle to the Corinthians, chap. iv. 6, he earnestly insists upon the conviction that those only will be saved who persevere in the reformation promised at baptism, and at the end of chap. 6, adds, “if we do not preserve baptism pure and unadulterated, *upon what else will we trust*, that we may come into the kingdom of God? or who could be our advocate (*παράκλητος*) if we had not performed holy and religious actions.”

Origen, in his homilies on Leviticus, Homil. 12, sec. 6, says, “If any of us christians commits sin, he is rejected, (by Christ) even if he should not be rejected by the bishop, the bishop may not know the transgressor’s faults, or may occasionally judge by favor; the sinner, however, is cast out on account of his sins. Neither will the favor of men be of any service, for Christ will not take up such a soul into his communion; it is rejected.” Homil. 14, sec. 3: “On the other hand, it may happen that a person is cast out by an unrighteous sentence of the principal officers of the church. But if he did not before himself go out, that is, if he did nothing, for which he deserved to be cast out, *it will be of no injury to him* (with Christ,) though he has been excommunicated through the unjust sentence of men. And thus it happens, that sometimes, he that is cast out (by Christ) remains in the church, and he whom men seem to retain in the church, is really out of it.”

TERTULLIAN, (On shame, ch. 21,) expresses himself strongly against it, that the priest should have power to forgive sins of unchastity, which he regards as enormous transgressions, such as God alone can pardon. The bishop can only forgive minor faults; the greater, God alone can remit. He says, “produce an apostolical or prophetic example that imputes to you the power of forgiving such sins. As you are only entrusted with the business of exercising discipline, and do not wield power, but are a servant, how can you arrogate to yourself to forgive sins? Whence will you as-

cribe this right to the church? Perhaps, because the Lord said to Peter (Matt. xvi.) "upon this rock will I build my church," or, "whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven, and whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven?" If you presume that on this ground the power of loosing and binding has come to you, then you dare to change and frustrate the object of the Lord, *who spoke this to Peter for his own person.* For Jesus says, I will give to *thee*, and not, I will give to the *church* the keys; and, whatsoever you bind and loose, not, what *they*, (the bishops,) bind or loose:—"The church is the spirit which operates in the spiritual man; but the *bishops are not the church.* To the *Master belong the right and the decision, not to the servant; to God and not to the priest.*"

Cyprian in his book On the Lapsed, says, "let no one deceive, no one delude you. The Lord alone can exercise mercy. He alone can release from sins, which have been committed against him who bore our sins, whom God gave as a ransom for our sins. *Man cannot be greater than God,* and the servant cannot forgive what has been committed against his master, so that it may not be added to the guilt of the lapsed, that he did not know the declaration of Jeremiah, (ch. xvii. 5.) "Cursed be the man who trusteth in man."

## II.

### WHAT IS DEMANDED OF US IN ORDER TO BE SAVED.

Hermas in his Shepherd, 2. B. ch. 7, says, "Fear God and you shall live; All who fear him and keep his commandments, have their life in the Lord; they who do not obey him, have not life."

Irenaeus against the Heretics, 4. B, ch. xv. sec. 1, says, "God first admonished men by the natural commandments which he from the beginning implanted in men, that is, by the ten commandments. *He that does not observe these, will not be saved.*"

Cyprian on the Lord's Prayer, says, "Since the word, our Lord Jesus Christ, has come for all, and has given the commandments of salvation to the learned and unlearned, to each sex, and every age, he embraces his commandments in a very short expression, so that they, who were learning the heavenly doctrine, might easily impress it on their memory, and soon learn what is necessary to simple faith. As he wished to teach, *on what the attainment of salvation depended,* he comprehended the mystery of salvation in the

short, divine words, (John xvii. 3.) "This is eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." For this reason, as he wished to select the first and most important commandments out of the law and the prophets, he said; "Hear, O Israel ! the Lord thy God is one God ; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, &c. &c."

### III.

#### THAT IT IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO THE TRUTH, WHETHER IT BE OLD OR NEW.

Tertullian, on the Veiling of Virgins, says, (ch. i.) "Our Lord Jesus Christ called himself the *truth*, not a *derivation*. Thus as Christ is eternal, and older than all ; so is also the truth an eternal and old thing. Heresies are recognized as such by the truth, and not by their novelty. *Whatever opposes the truth is heresy, even if it be of ancient origin.*

Again, (ch. xvi.) "I defend my opinion by the scriptures, nature, and the moral feeling. The scriptures are God's, nature is God's, the moral feeling is God's. *What is opposed to these, is not divine.* If the scriptures are uncertain, nature is distinct ; is nature doubtful, the moral feeling shows what is pleasing to God."

Arnobius, (against the Heathen, in B. 2.) says, "Our subject which we treat (religion) is new ; but it will once become old ; yours is old, but when it began, it was also new and uncommon. The validity of a religion is not to be estimated according to its antiquity, but according to its deity, (numine,) and men must look to what they worship, not to when they began to worship."

Lactanctius, (Instruction in Divine Things, B. 2, ch. 8.) says, "As striving after truth is natural to all men, they withdraw themselves even from the love of wisdom, who without exercising their own judgment, sanction the caprices of their ancestors, and suffer themselves to be led by others, like irrational brutes. What prevents us from following the example of our (heathen) ancestors, but that, as they delivered to their successors the error discovered by them, we deliver to our successors the truth discovered by us, as that which is much better?"

Cyprian in his 31st Epistle, says, "Some, who must grant us our principles, in vain oppose to us the origin of our system ; just as if the origin of a thing, was of more importance than the truth, or that in spiritual things it was not right to follow that which is best,

which the Holy Ghost reveals. And in Epis. 74. "The origin of the truth cannot prevent the final triumph of the truth. *For a source which is not true, is an old error.*"

#### IV.

The Emperor Constantine the Great, wrote (about the year 314,) to his governor in Africa on the subject of a controversy which had arisen about the bishop Caecilian in Carthage, (see the council of Mansi, vol. II. p. 463,) and said, "In order to decide the controversy, I had commanded, that Caecilian, as well as several of his opponents should personally appear in Rome. I had also ordered that several bishops from Gaul should come to *my city of Rome*, (ad urbem nostram Romam,) *that they, and also the bishop of the city of Rome*, should bring this matter to a decision. They have made known to me every thing which was done in their presence, and have exhibited to me their proceedings, with the assurance, that they judged according to the equity of the case," &c. The same emperor wrote on the same subject to bishop Chrestus in Syracuse, (see Mansi, p. 466,) and said; "In order to end the controversy, I had commanded that several bishops from Gaul, and at the same time the opponents from Africa, should come to Rome, so that, at the same time in presence of the bishop of Rome, (præsente insuper Romano episcopo,) every thing which had been agitated, might by a close examination be settled in the presence of all," &c. (Constantine the Great called together not only the council of Arles, but also one at Rome on account of the Donatists, and then the first General Council at Nice in 325. He always conducted himself as lord of the bishops and of the bishop of Rome.)

#### V.

##### THE ROMAN BISHOPS WERE ON AN EQUALITY WITH OTHER BISHOPS WHO ALSO BORE THE TITLE, "PAPA "

In the "Apostolical Constitutions" in B. 7, ch. 46, the bishops whom the apostles ordained are mentioned by name, and there stand the two first bishops of Rome, Linus and Clemens, without any distinction among the bishops of other places. In B. 8, ch. 10, it is enjoined; "The christians must pray for the whole holy apostolic church ; for all bishops ; for James, (bishop of Jerusalem,) for Clemens, (bishop of Rome,) for Exodus, &c. &c. in

which the bishop of Rome stands in the series and is placed after the bishop of Jerusalem.

The bishops at the council of Arles, (in 314) gave the Roman bishop, who was not present, notice of their decisions in a letter, (Mansi, vol. II. p. 469,) in which they say, "Faithfully adhering to the common bond of brotherly love, and the unity of the mother, the imperial church, we, assembled in the city of Arles *at the command of the Emperor*, salute you, illustrious father, (papa) with proper reverence. For it seemed good (placuit) to us, that from thee and by thee, who hast *a larger diocese*, all should be notified (of our decisions.)"

Particularly important are the letters of CYPRIAN, bishop of Carthage, and his correspondence with the Roman bishops. The Roman bishop gives Cyprian the title of papa, (in 30th and 31st letters,) and in a letter to Cyprian, (2d letter) says, "We have heard that the blessed papa (pope) Cyprian was dead." Cyprian in his letter to the bishop of Rome, not only calls him his *colleague*, (letters 3, 52,) but throughout treats him as a colleague, and never as a superior. The most important of his correspondence with Rome, the authenticity of which is not doubted, is the following. In letter 29th, he writes to the bishop of Rome, thus: "The mutual affection which our relation demands, as well as my disposition, not to keep any thing from you, what I undertake, so that we may agree in our decisions, respecting that which is of benefit to the church, &c." The Roman bishop answers thus, (let. 13,) "You have conducted yourself as is your custom, in communicating unto us a matter, which occasions anxiety. It is the duty of *us all*, to take care of the body of the whole church, whose members are scattered through so many different provinces." He again writes to Cyprian, (let. 31,) "Although an honest mind is satisfied with the approbation of God, and neither seeks the praise of others, nor fears their blame, yet those are worthy of double praise, who, whilst they know, *that they are accountable only to the judgment of God*, yet wish to see their actions also *sanctioned* by their brethren. That you do this, dear brother Cyprian, is not to be wondered at, inasmuch as you with your natural modesty and circumspection wish to have us not so much *judges*, but rather *partakers* of your decisions, *so that we by sanctioning your actions gain praise, and can become heirs of your good counsels, because we follow them*. For men will consider that as our mutual work, in which we will be found united in harmony of opinion and discipline." Cyprian

(in let. 52) after mentioning that he had called a council of African bishops, to settle a controversy about the *lapsed*, continues; “Lest the number of African bishops might not appear sufficient, I have also written to my colleague, Cornelius (bishop of Rome,) on this subject, who with several fellow bishops at a meeting held by them expressed the same opinion with us.” In requesting the Roman bishop Stephen to adopt the decision of the African bishops on the baptism of heretics, he writes to him, (let. 72,) “These things I have communicated to you, dear brother, partly because of *our common office*, and partly because of *sincere love*, for I believe that to you, according to the truth of your piety and faith, that will be agreeable, which is as pious as it is true. Moreover, as I know, that many persevere in their opinion, and without at all loosing the bond of peace and unity among colleagues, desire to cling to the custom of their churches, I will force no one in this matter, or prescribe any thing, *inasmuch as every bishop dare preserve his own judgment in administering the affairs of his church, for he must give an account to the Lord for his actions.*”

At the council of Carthage, (in 256,) where the bishops of the provinces of Africa, Numidia and Mauritania, were assembled; Cyprian, who presided over the assembly said; that he would not force his opinions on any one, and added: “for no one of us makes himself a bishop of bishops, or by any tyranny constrains his colleagues to a forced obedience, as every bishop according to his liberty and power is free to his own resolution, and is as little bound to follow the directions of others, as he is authorized to give them to others. We rather all expect the decision of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone has the power of delivering to us the government of the church, and to judge our actions.”

## VI.

### ON MATT. XVI. 18.—JOHN XX. 23.

Origen (Comm. on Matt. Tim. XII. 10. F.) makes the following observations on the words “*Thou art Peter,*” &c. “Every disciple of Christ is a rock, and upon such a rock the whole ecclesiastical doctrine, and that which belongs to it, are built. But if you would believe that the whole church of God is built on *Peter alone*, what would you say of John and the other apostles? Or would any one dare to maintain that the gates of hell could prevail only not against Peter, but are stronger than all the other apostles and the pious?

Are not the words; “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” addressed to *all* and to *each*? Just as the words, “upon this rock will I build my church?” Were the keys of the kingdom of heaven given to Peter alone, so that none of the other apostles received them? But if the words, “I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” refer to all, (Matt. xviii. 18.) why not also the preceding, which *seems* to be addressed to Peter alone?” (He maintains, that every one who has the *same disposition* and *character* of Peter, is a *spiritual Peter*, and that the words of Christ are applicable also to him.)

Tertullian.—See the remarkable passage under No. 1.

Cyprian refers the words “thou art Peter” &c. to the institution of the episcopal dignity generally, and says in Letter 27; “Our Lord in founding the *episcopal office* and order in his church, says to Peter (Matt. xvi. 18, 19.) “I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock,” &c. From this is dated the establishment of episcopacy and the organization of the church, by means of the succession in the course of time so that the church rests upon *the bishops*, and all the business of the church is conducted by them, as *superiors*.” In his book “On the Unity of the Church” in which he particularly labours to show, that the clergy subject to the bishop cannot be separated from him, because the episcopal office, upon which the church rests, is one and the same; in that book, he also labors to show the unity of the episcopal office, because it began with *one*, namely Peter; for although Jesus afterwards bestowed the same office on all the apostles, yet it was given to Peter first, so that the episcopal authority began originally from a unity. The remarkable and often misapprehended words of Cyprian are as follows;

“The Lord says to Peter (Matt. xvi. 18, 19) I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock,” &c. after his resurrection, he says to him (John xxi. 15, 17.) “feed my sheep.” Upon him he builds his church, and makes it his duty, to feed his lambs. And although after his resurrection, *he imparts the same power to all the apostles*, and says (John xx. 21.) “as my father hath sent me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose soever sins ye remit, &c. yet in order to show the unity of the episcopal office he determined it, that the *origin* of this unity should *begin* with one. *All the other apostles were in every respect, what Peter was, partaking of the same employment, the same honor, the same power, but the beginning was with one*, the honor of the beginning was given

to Peter, to show that the church of Christ was one, and that the episcopal office was one.” The words; primatus Petro datur, do not in this connection mean, that Peter had any authority over the other apostles, but only, that he was *first* nominated bishop, and the others at a later period. The passage from Cyprian’s 71st letter in No. VI. proves this irrefutably.

## VII.

*That Peter was not supreme among the other apostles*, not only the passages above quoted fully show, but it appears very plain from other expressions of the fathers.

Origen (Hom. Exod. Hom. ix. § 3.) compares the christian church to the tabernacle, and says; “The pillars of the church are the teachers and servants, of whom Paul (Galat. ii. 9) says; *James, Cephas, (Peter) and John, who seemed to be pillars.*” But the head of the pillars is he, of whom the apostle (1 Cor. xi. 3.) says: “the head of every man is *Christ.*”—Origen in the third Homily on Numbers calls the apostle Paul, *the greatest of all the apostles.*

Clemens of Alexandria says, (according to Eusebius B. ii. ch. 1) Peter, James and John, much as they were honored of the Lord above others, yet did not contend among themselves about the place of honor after the ascension of Christ, but chose James the righteous as bishop of Jesusalem.

In the “Apostolical Constitution” Peter stands in the catalogue of other apostles without any distinction, and they say of him (B. vii. ch. 7.) “our fellow apostle, *Peter.*”

Cyprian in Letter 71, writes, “Peter also, whom the Lord first chose, and upon whom he built his church, when Paul afterwards contended with him about circumcision, (Gal. ii. 11, &c.) did not assume a proud and arrogant stand, as if he had said, that he was *first* called, and the new converts and those called subsequently must obey him.

## VIII.

*That the primacy in the church was not given to the bishop of Rome, after the death of all the apostles*, is plainly proved from some passages which Eusebius quotes in his church history from ancient writers:

Hegesippus, who lived after the middle of the second history writes thus; (Euseb. II. 23.) “After the apostles, James, the brother of the Lord, by all called the righteous, received the church.”

Eusebius says, (Hist. iii. 20.) In the time of the Emperor Domitian there were yet several relatives of Jesus, grand-sons of Judas, the full brother of Jesus, whom Domitian summoned before him, but as they were inoffensive men, without wealth, they were released. "After their release they are said to have had the government of the churches, because at the same time they were witnesses and relatives of Jesus." Of the same men Eusebius says (III. 32) "they govern the whole church as witnesses, and because they are of the family of the Lord."

How could this have been entrusted to the relatives of the Lord, if Peter had been the chief of the apostles, and had given his supremacy to the bishops of Rome, as the Romish church maintains?

## IX.

### NO CONSTRAINT IN MATTERS OF FAITH.

Tertullian (to Scapula) says; "According to human right and natural liberty, every man may worship, what he esteems (as divine;) the religion of the one does not promote or hinder another. But it is not in accordance with religion, to force it upon men, but it must be rather accepted voluntarily, not by constraint."

Lactantius (Instruction in Divine Things, B. v. ch. 20.) says; "There is no need of force or injustice, because religion cannot be forced. The business is to be done with *words* not with *stripes*, so that it may be voluntary. Let them (the heathen) rather apply the keenness of their understanding, and if they have right principles, let them advance them. If they want to teach, we are ready to hear them; if they remain silent, we will not believe in them, and if they rage, we will not be moved. Let them imitate us, and bring forward the grounds of the whole matter."

## X.

### PRIESTS ARE NOT TO BE LORDS.

Origen in the 16th Homil. on Genesis, says in his explanation of ch. xlvii. 21, &c. "Do you wish to know the difference between the priests of Pharaoh and the priests of God? Pharaoh gave land to his priests, but the Lord did not give to his priests land for their portion, but said: "I will be your portion." Numb. xviii. 20. Hence, consider well, all ye priests of the Lord, this difference, that ye may not appear to be the priests of Pharaoh rather than the

priests of the Lord, if ye possess land and apply yourselves to earthly business. Pharaoh wishes, that his priests should own land, and be more intent on agriculture than doing good to men's souls—more intent on the field than on the law. But Christ commands his priests (Luke xiv. 33) “whosoever of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” In the 6th Hom. on Isaiah § 1, he says: “he who is called as bishop, is called not to the dominion, but to the service of the church.” In his commentary on Matthew § 61, he says: “every bishop, who does not serve his brethren as a servant, but as a lord or master, sins against God.”

In his commentary on Romans B. 9, ch. iii. “he who is set over his brethren or the church, dare not be burthened with the anxiety of human cares and worldly things.”

## XI.

### THE FREE USE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Origen (Hom. on Jeremiah iii. 6.) admonishes to the reading of the scriptures as the best means of moral reformation: “true reformation is (that is, is occasioned by) the reading of the Old Testament, the consideration and imitation of the righteous,—the reading of the New Testament and the words of the apostles, which after reading, men must write on their hearts and live according to them, &c. &c.

Cyprian (on the Theatre) admonishes men, instead of looking on the heathen exhibitions, to contemplate the great theatre of God; “particularly must the believing christian always be employed with the holy scriptures, where he finds worthy exhibitions of faith.”

Pamphilius (the friend and contemporary of Eusebius) is praised by Jerome (Apol. I. against Rufin) “that he very cheerfully distributed the holy scriptures, not only to be read, but to be kept, to men and women, whom he saw diligently reading.”

The Emperor Julian, who apostatized from christianity preferred it as a charge against Christians (according to Cyril Alexander vi. 9.) “that they allowed women and children to read the scriptures.”

## XII.

### TRADITION.

The oldest fathers certainly attached some importance to that, which the apostles orally taught in the first churches, because their

writings were only gradually committed to paper, and in the beginning, partly on account of the distance of the churches from one another, and partly on account of the high price of transcription, were not every where to be had. But as the writings of the evangelists and apostles were more extensively diffused and gradually collected together in the second century, and this collection formed itself into what we still call the New Testament, the fathers attached the greatest importance to these, as the most certain source of the knowledge of the doctrine of Christ and the apostles, and were far removed from the thought, that tradition contained any thing else, than what the writings of the evangelists and apostles taught. We learn from their writings, that in the course of time tradition not only became uncertain, and that heretics appealed to tradition in favor of their errors, but also that the teachers of the church judged the truth of tradition by the scriptures, as the safest criterion.

Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in the beginning of the second century, wrote five books in explanation of the expressions of Christ, which have been lost. But Eusebius relates, that Papias said; every thing that he had written down he had received from the oral instruction of apostolic men, for he had only asked, what John, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, and Matthew, had taught. He is the first who bears testimony to tradition. Eusebius (Hist. III. last ch.) says of Papias; "This writer also brings much more forward, which is said to have been received by him from oral tradition, some *very strange* parables, and expressions of the redeemer, and *some things which are but too fabulous*."

According to Irenaeus (adv. Haer. 5.) there was a controversy between the Roman and Asiatic churches on the continuance of fasts, in which the former appealed to traditions received from Paul and Peter, and the latter to those received from John. Irenaeus attached great importance to oral tradition, yet he says, (adv. Haer. B. 3, ch. 1, § 1.) "We have learned the order of our salvation from none others, than those, through whom the gospel came to us, who at first it is true delivered it orally, but afterwards according to the will of God, reduced it to writing *for us, so that it might be the ground and pillar of our faith.*" He then speaks of the compilation of our four gospels, and continues; "He who does not agree with these scriptures, despises the partakers of the life of the Lord, despises Christ,—which all heretics do. And in ch. 4, § 1, he says; "If a controversy arose on a question, however un-

important, would we not have to go back to the oldest churches, in which the apostles lived, so that we might receive from them the truth of the matter! *But if the apostles had not left behind them writings*, would we not have to follow the oral traditions which they gave to the churches in which they taught?" (Irenaeus here evidently prefers the scriptures to traditions.)

Origen (2d Homil. on Ezek. § 2.) "*Hear the heretics, how they maintain*, that they have the tradition of the apostles. -But if a thousand persons would hold my discourses as true, and they were false according to one expression of God, (in the scriptures) of what avail would it be to me? That is the thing, after which we must long, that the Lord stands by me *as witness of my instructions, that he himself establishes by testimony of the scriptures, what I bring forth.*"

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, resolved with the African bishops, at a synod, that those christians baptized by heretical parties, if they should turn to the general church, must again be baptized, because the baptism of heretics was not valid. He communicated these resolutions to the Roman bishop, Stephen, who did not agree with him, maintained the validity of heretical baptism, and referred to tradition for his grounds. He had expressed the principle against Cyprian, that no innovations must be made, unless they were supported by tradition. In his 73d letter Cyprian expresses himself on that subject thus; "Whence does tradition originate? from the authority of the Lord and the evangelists, or from the commands and letters of the apostles? for God himself testifies (John i. 8.) *that only that which is written*, shall come to pass. If then either in the gospels, or in the letters of the apostles, or in acts of the apostles, it is commanded or forbidden to baptize those coming over from the heretical parties, but only to lay hands upon them, such a divine and holy tradition would have to be observed. But it is hardness of heart and prejudice to prefer a human tradition to the divine command. If we go back to the head and source of the divine tradition, (that is, the scriptures) human error stands aside, and yields. If a canal abundantly flowing suddenly dries up, do we not go to the source, in order to find out the reason of the drying up? Thus must the priest do, (in this controversy) when the truth on a subject is uncertain and wavering, we must go back to the source which springs from the Lord, and to the scriptural doctrine of the evangelists and apostles. On the same subject Firmilian (letter 17.) "As respects the assertion of Stephen, that the apos-

tles orally gave the prohibition to baptize those returning from the heretics, you answer perfectly right, when you say, *no one can be so foolish as to believe it.* That those at Rome do not observe every thing that was originally taught, and *in vain* refer to the authority of the apostles, we can see from this, that on the celebration of the feast of the passover, and *many other mysteries of religion they entertain erroneous opinions*, and do not observe every thing in like manner, as it occurs at Jerusalem.”

### XIII.

#### ALL PIUS CHRISTIANS ARE PRIESTS.

Clemens of Alexandria (Strom. IV. 25.) says; “only those who live purely are the true priests of God.” (Strom. VII. 2.) where he speaks of the wise and pious man, adds, “He alone is the real royal man; he is the holy priest of God.”

Tertullian (Exhortation to Chastity, ch. 7.) says, “We would err vastly, if we believed, that what does not become a priest, can be allowed to the layman. *Are not also laymen priests?* It is written (Rev. i. 9.) he made us kings and priests unto God, his father.” *The church has made the distinction between the priestly order and the people.* Where three are assembled, there is a church; even if they are laymen. For each one lives by his own faith. If then you have in yourself, where you necessarily must have it, the right of a priest, this priestly right must render necessary the exercise of priestly duties. Origen in Homil. 9, on Leviticus, § 9, says; All who (in baptism) have been anointed with the holy oil, are priests, as Peter (1. Ep. ii. 9.) said to the whole church; ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy people. Every one of us also has his (priestly) sacrifice within himself. If I bestow my goods upon the poor, take up my cross and follow Christ,—If I love my brethren, so that I lay down my life for them, if I contend for righteousness and truth until my death; if I mortify the lusts of the flesh within me; If the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world; then I have offered a sacrifice on the altar of God, them I am myself the priest of my sacrifice.

### XIV.

#### WITHHOLDING THE CUP.

In the more ancient church there is not a single trace, that men ever made it a question whether the cup should be administered;

the cup was every where administered. The so called "Apostolic Constitutions," but which are of later origin, determine the mode of administering the Lord's Supper expressly thus, (B. 8, ch. 13.) "The bishop shall hold out the sacrifice (the bread) and say; *the body of Christ!* and he who receives it, shall say, *Amen!* But the deacon shall take the cup and extending say, *the blood of Christ, the cup of life!* and he who drinks it shall say, *Amen!*"

The veneration of the fathers for this institution of Christ was so great, that they declared it as highly unbecoming, that some offered not wine mixed with water, but only water in the cup. Cyprian writes on this subject, (letter 63.) "You know that we are bound, in the administration of the cup to observe the directions of the Lord, and to do nothing else, but what Christ did first, that is, offer wine mixed with water. *But that we are not at all to depart* from the gospel directions, and that the disciples are to observe and to do, what the master teaches and does, Paul insists upon very expressly. (Gal. i. 6.) As neither the apostle himself, nor an angel from heaven can teach differently from what Christ and the apostles have taught, it surprises me much, that at some places (mere) water is offered in the cup of the Lord, against the gospel and apostolic institution. For if in that sacrifice offered by Christ, Christ alone is to be followed, we must observe and do, what Jesus commanded to be observed and done. *For men must follow divine truth, not the customs of men.* If according to Matt. v. 19, it is not allowed to destroy the least divine commandment, how much more is it our duty, not to break or to change out of human tradition into any thing else than what the divine institution is, that which belongs to so great a mystery, having reference to the sufferings of the Lord and our redemption."

## XV.

Cardinal Bellarmine himself counts eighteen popes who occasioned the dethronement of temporal princes. In the Glossas to the papal decretals, the most extravagant representations of the papal power are made. Glossa in cap. 2, c. 15, quaest. 6, it is said, "The pope can grant dispensation against *the gospel, the apostles and natural rights.* The Glossa to canon 3, tit. 7, lib. 1, decret. Gregor IX. says, "The only reason, which is to be given for every thing the pope does, is, *because it is his will.* And who would be bold enough, and hazard the presumption to say unto him, why dost thou act thus? *As he is exalted above all privilege,* so he can

also grant dispensations from all! *Unrighteousness itself* he can justify; all imperial acts he can *according to his pleasure* change or subvert." The *Glossa ad cap. 4. Extravag. Joann. XXII. de verbor. signific.* says, "If any one is bold enough to maintain, that the *Lord, our God, the pope*, the author of these *decretals*, could not command them, he must be considered a heretic," (afterwards they became ashamed of the blasphemous words, "the Lord, our God" and omitted them; but they are yet to be found in several old editions, ex. gr. those of Lyons, 1584 and 1606, and of Paris, 1585, 1601, 1612.) Pope Gregory VII. declared the German emperor as deposed, and absolved all his subjects from the oath of allegiance. Pope Adrian IV. gave permission to Mary II. of England to conquer Ireland, under the promise that the king would send to Rome an annual tribute from every house. Pope Innocent III. absolved the English from the oath of fidelity to king John, and bestowed England to France, and John was obliged to purchase the favor of the pope with the promise of sending annually to Rome 1000 marks, as farm rent for England and Ireland. The principle established by the popes, "that the pope is the only bishop of the christian world, and that the whole church property is his," they employed in such a manner as to tax all the countries of the west in a variety of ways. They withdrew the monasteries from the inspection of the bishops, and took them into their own protection in consideration of a large sum of money; they now maintained, that they alone had the right to appoint bishops, and had large sums of money paid to them by the newly appointed bishops, particularly in Germany, for that honor. But they did not stop here. Pope John XXII. assumed for the popes the yearly revenue of every vacant parish. Paul II. commanded (1470) that the revenue of every parish in every fifteenth year must be delivered over to the papal treasury. Further, they claimed for themselves the revenue of all the parishes during their vacancy, and the right of inheriting the property of all deceased priests. The largest sums of money were procured from the sale of indulgences. Not satisfied with those, which were requested of them, they often sent bills of indulgence into different countries, particularly to Germany. Very profitable also was the year of jubilee; it was introduced by pope Boniface VIII. in 1301, (which he founded on Lev. ch. xxv.) in which all pilgrims coming to Rome received perfect indulgence. It was designed to be celebrated only every 100 years, but was so profitable, that this time was found too long. Hence

pope Clemens VI. commanded it (1350,) to be celebrated every fifty years; pope Urban VI. ordered it to be also celebrated in the 33d year of every century, (because Christ lived thirty-three years) but Paul II. ordered it every 25th year, to which Boniface IX. (1390) yet added, that the indulgence should be received, if only the money, which the pilgrimage to Rome would cost, was sent to Rome. None were more weary of these endless oppressions than the German princes. They did not cease to state their grievances, and to insist upon a removal of them; *but all in vain. They had to endure these oppressions, until the reformation made an end of them.*











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